

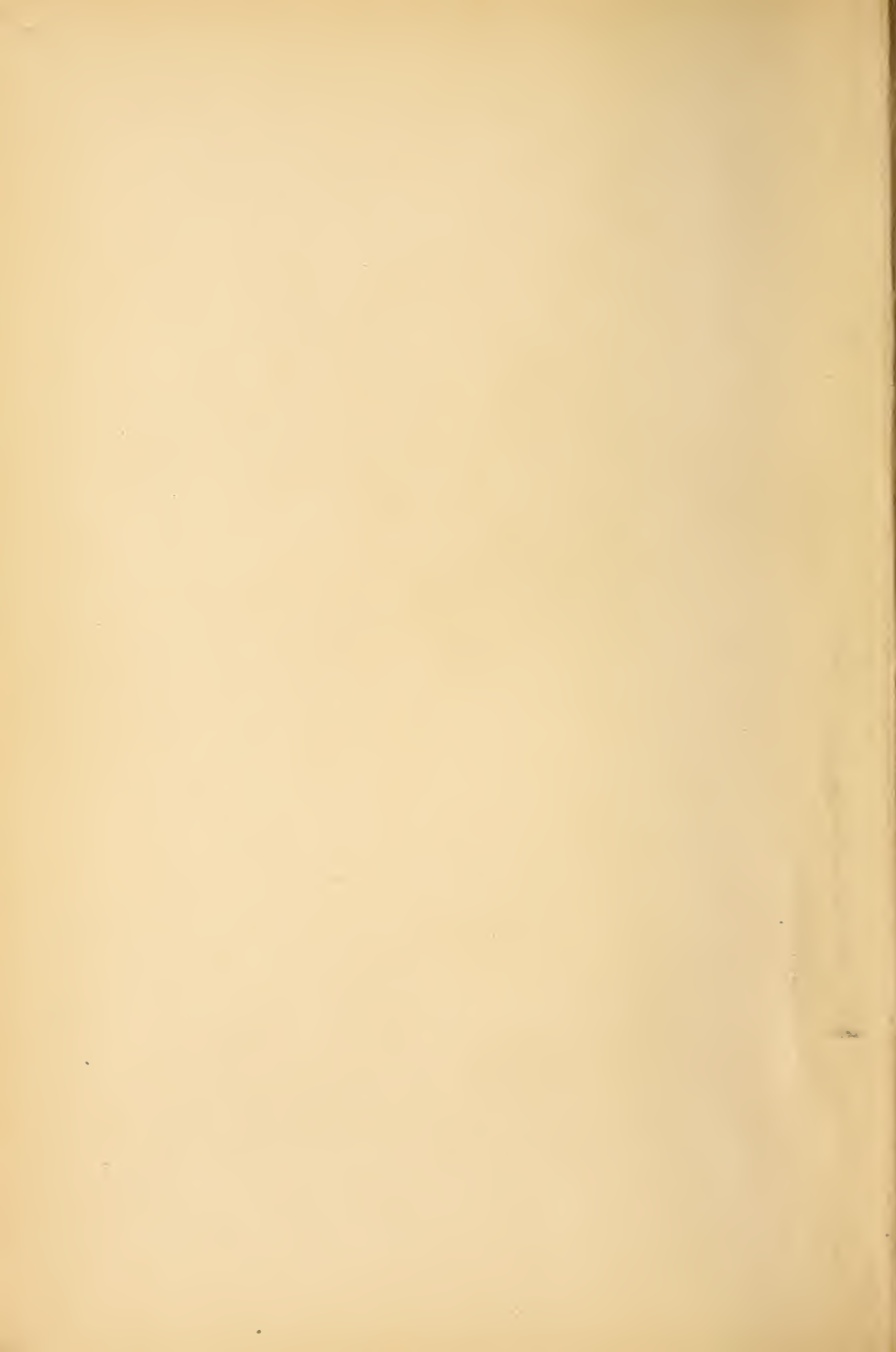


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. \_\_\_\_\_ Copyright No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Shelf BX6495  
.D5D5

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











*Affectionately Yours*

James S. Dickerson







JAMES STOKES DICKERSON:

MEMORIES OF HIS LIFE.

BY HIS WIFE,

EMMA R. DICKERSON,

ASSISTED BY

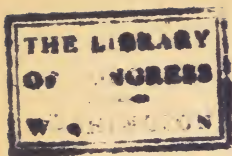
PROF. A. C. KENDRICK, D.D.,

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER.

---

NEW YORK: SHELDON & CO.  
CHICAGO: S. C. GRIGGS AND COMPANY.

1879.



BX 6495  
I 5 I 5

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1879, by  
EMMA R. DICKERSON,  
in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

---

DONNELLEY, GASSETTE & LOYD, PRINTERS, CHICAGO.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

---

THE author of this memoir desires to acknowledge especial obligation, for aid in its preparation, to Prof. A. C. Kendrick, D.D., Rev. J. A. Smith, D.D., Rev. J. D. Fulton, D.D., Pres. M. B. Anderson, L.L.D., Rev. D. B. Cheney, D.D., Rev. E. K. Alden, D.D., Rev. Geo. C. Lorimer, D.D., Pres. H. E. Robins, D.D., Prof. W. C. Wilkinson, D.D., Rev. A. H. Burlingham, D.D., Rev. William Aikman, D.D., and other family friends.





## INTRODUCTION.

---

Macaulay, in one of his brilliant essays, declares that men are prone to extol the virtues and forget the faults of the honored ones who have passed away: that they transform into idols those who were never idolized in life; and often speak of them in such a way that those who knew them best would fail to recognize them. The general truth of the statement may be beyond question; yet I willingly leave it to the readers of the following memorial to decide whether it is without exception. I feel assured that while, even to many who knew him, this record of the life of one of God's choicest servants will reveal much hitherto unsuspected by them, his inner circle of friends will rise from its perusal with the conviction that the portraiture is one of substantial truth, and yet that scarcely the half has been unfolded.

I do not undertake this work in the belief that my late husband was one of the great men of his time; but in the conviction that there are comparatively few who, in this world of sin and selfishness, live a life so pure, so beautiful, and so noble as his; few who bring to all who come into contact with them so much of joy and sunshine; few who themselves labor from higher motives, or are a source to others of loftier inspiration; few who in a long career have kept themselves so nearly "unspotted from the world," or illustrated so beautifully the entire round of the Christian graces. Shall not such be deemed great in that order of things that brings to greatness its proper standard?

To me, I may say with frankness, my husband seemed well-

nigh perfect. To be conscious of his true, deep, ever-joyous love; to lean trustingly on his faithful arm, and bask in the sunshine of his inspiring presence; to be radiant with joy in his companionship, to sit under his attractive and Christ-like ministry, and in turn to minister joyfully to his comfort amidst perpetual words of loving appreciation — all this was to me little less than an earthly heaven. He was the center and the sun of our happy household. His absence but for a few hours made us sensible of a change of atmosphere. To hear his key in the door was the signal that we should be flooded with sunshine and laughter; that the children would have a good frolic; that words of mingled tenderness and humor would be spoken, and an electric thrill of gladness over the coming of "dear papa" would run round the whole household circle.

Yet were this all, it might be well to cherish the happy memories in the quietude of our own hearts and home. Other husbands have made homes happy; other wives have loved them as truly and tenderly; other children have looked with loving reverence to those whom they were proud to call their father. But this was far from all. In his boyhood he was loved by all his companions; in his youth every acquaintance became a friend; in his college days he was, by universal testimony, alike with students, professors, and the community, a universal favorite. On entering the world from college, he made friends of all his business acquaintances; was welcomed into every circle, and carried everywhere not only the light of his beaming smile, of his sunny temper, of his genial and sympathetic nature, but an instant and active response to every appeal of human need and sorrow to his warm heart and unfailing benevolence; while to the thousands who have sat under his ministry and shared his visits and counsels as pastor and friend, his very name is a talisman to evoke the sweetest associations and the most sacred memories. Loving all, he was loved by all. Living supremely for Christ, the affections and

energies which he had consecrated to him he poured out as from a full urn, lavishly and unselfishly, upon the great work of purifying and elevating men.

The story of a life so intrinsically beautiful, and, tried by the true standard of success, so eminently successful, will be read with interest by those who knew him, and will, I am persuaded, prove to multitudes who knew him not, a source of moral quickening and inspiration. The portrayal of it in its principles and its workings can scarcely fail to be salutary and ennobling. If the evil that men do too commonly lives after them, it is surely our duty and our privilege to endeavor that virtue shall have a like survival, and that the richest and purest Christian graces shall not share the grave of him in whom they were embodied to purify and bless humanity. I sit down, therefore, with a happy heart to the work of perpetuating the memory of one so dearly loved, and along with this, so far as I may, his Christ-like and blessed influence. For him to live was Christ. May his beautiful life and consistent Christian example inspire in me and others the like spirit of consecration; may it urge us to keep, like him, near to the Savior, that ours may at length be, like his, the Apostolic triumph that we have fought the good fight, and won the crown of righteousness that awaits us in the day of his appearing.

With many precious memories of the past, and bright hopes of the glad hereafter, this little volume is given to the Christian public.

EMMA R. DICKERSON.





# JAMES S. DICKERSON.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

JAMES S. DICKERSON was born in the city of Philadelphia, July 6, 1825. His father, John Dickerson, was a Pennsylvanian by birth, and a prominent man in its most populous city, and also in the county. He had come to Philadelphia when a boy, and learned the carriage-making trade with his brother, and very soon disclosed a remarkable genius for mechanics, for printing, and for music. When he became a man he took many positions of trust in the community; was elected coroner of the city and county of Philadelphia, and at the expiration of his term of office was re-elected for three years. For many years he was a lumber merchant, and invented a rule for measuring lumber, which could be used as a cane. He made the canes himself, stamped all the figures upon them, and finished them at home in the evenings.

Although a good business man, and familiar with public and official life, he was even better known in social circles. Prepossessing in appearance, genial in manner, full of humor, and an excellent musician,

he was a favorite wherever such qualities had scope, and was constantly required, alike at weddings and evening gatherings, to lend the charm of his presence and voice to the entertainment. He composed church music, engraved his own plates, and printed his own compositions. Some of his books are still in existence. Braham, of England, who during these years was a noted vocalist, when he visited America, went to Philadelphia to see "John Dickerson, the singer and composer." He was a very conscientious man and one who loved to make others happy. In a large, comfortable building which he owned near his house, he had during winter evenings his singing classes: one, for those who paid him for their instruction a moderate sum, and the other, for the poor. The money he received was spent in buying singing books for such of those whom he wished to teach as were unable to pay, so that all might be able to sing in church correctly.

His singing served him many a good turn. Once, while journeying from Philadelphia to Ohio, alternately by stage-coach, or canal, or on foot, he stopped for dinner at a farm-house. He had been walking for miles, and had about thirty more to travel before he reached the stage-coach line again. Seeing in a field near the house a fine white colt, he asked the woman, who had just given him a good bowl of bread and milk, to let him saddle the colt and ride these thirty miles. Such was the custom of those days, some one returning over the route bringing back the horse the next day. She refused to let him take it. As he sat resting he began to sing a

plaintive song entitled "Joseph and his brethren." Before he had finished the first two stanzas, the woman stopped her work and wept. As he ceased singing she turned and said, with a trembling voice, "Sing me the rest of that song, sir, and you may have the colt." His singing did not quite equal, in its effects, the "redemption" that "rose up in the Attic Muse" when the plaintive strains of Euripides, chanted by the Athenian captives, softened their masters in the Sicilian quarries; but, at all events, it saved him a hot and dusty walk of thirty miles.

His conscientiousness was as striking as his music, of which trait a slight illustration is preserved in the following incident of his boyhood. While with his brother in the carriage-making trade he was sent, as they were in but moderate circumstances, with a jug to buy a small quantity of oil. For the dollar which he handed the merchant in payment, he received four silver pieces, each of which he supposed to be a quarter of a dollar. As he looked at them, he resolved to keep one of the quarters and give his brother the three to which he was entitled. He had more than a mile to walk: the jug with its rope handle was not an easy thing to carry, and he had frequently to sit down and rest on the way. But the more he rested in body, the more he grew unquiet in his conscience, until when he nearly reached home, the inner burden became heavier than the outer, and forced him with the double weight all the way back. Showing the merchant the coin he had given him, and saying that it was too much, he was asked how soon he had made the

discovery. He replied, "As soon as I left the store, but I was almost home before I made up my mind to return the money." The merchant explained that the boy was mistaken in the value of the pieces, that the change he had given him was right, "and here," he added, "is a quarter dollar for your honesty." The incident no doubt strengthened those conscientious principles which became prime elements of his character, and of which another pleasing trait is recorded. He accepted the office of Coroner—then more reputable than it is now—for a definite and noble purpose. It was an old-time custom in Philadelphia for the twelve jurors who held the inquest, to receive, instead of the dollar each, to which the law entitled them, a rousing treat of liquor from the Coroner; and to do away with the usage, Mr. John Dickerson accepted the office. A reformer before the temperance reformation, he succeeded in abolishing the graceless custom, though at the cost of incurring much displeasure. Yet his weight of character overcame the popular resentment, and he was re-elected to the office.

It will be readily seen where James inherited many of his personal traits, and they were even more pronounced in the son than in the father. The humor that played over every subject, and the wit that often flashed like lightning to its core; the social grace and geniality, the musical taste and talent, and more than all, the stern conscientiousness that refused to compromise with wrong, were in no small degree transmitted to James from his father.

His maternal descent was equally reputable. The







Eng. H. W. P. 1840

Sincerely & Affect. V. yours  
Thomas Stokes

father of his mother, Thomas Stokes, was born in London, England, in 1765, and "was born again," in the language of his diary, "in 1783." Though occupying a position in London which gave him access to the highest and most fashionable circles, his chief pleasures were in communion with God and his people, and his chief activity devoted to the cause of the Redeemer. He was associated with Robert Raikes in originating that characteristic institution of the modern church, the Sunday school; under the ministrations of Rowland Hill, to whose congregation he attached himself, he was among the first to feel the throbbings of the missionary spirit then awaking in England; did much by his correspondence to promote and develop it; aided in the formation of the London Missionary Society, and was one of the last to leave the deck of the first missionary ship, "The Duff," that in September, 1796, bore twenty-nine missionaries to Tahiti. In 1798 he left England for New York; was baptized in 1807 into the Baptist Church, by Rev. Charles Lahatt, and when, under the then young and eloquent preacher, Archibald Maclay, the Mulberry Street Church was organized, he became a deacon in that church, which office he held till death. Nor had he left behind him his glowing missionary zeal. He was present at the formation of the Baptist General Convention for Missions in Philadelphia, in 1814; was for a few years its treasurer, and a fast friend of it till his death. His religious working was equally efficient outside of his own denomination. He was in 1816 one of the founders of the

American Bible Society ; was associated with William Ladd, David L. Dodge, and Anson G. Phelps, in founding the New York Peace Society, and in 1825 aided in organizing the American Tract Society, of whose Managing Board and Committee on Distribution he was an active member. He died a triumphant Christian death in October, 1832. His grandson, the subject of this memoir, prepared a few years ago a small "In Memoriam" volume, a worthy and beautiful tribute to a life of unobtrusive, but active piety, and most efficient and varied service to the cause of Christ.

He left a large family of children, of whom several are still living in New York as prominent and reputable merchants. One of them, James Stokes, married the daughter of Anson G. Phelps, and has long been a member of the well-known firm of Phelps, Dodge & Co. The mother of James, Eliza Ann, was born in Sing Sing, N. Y., October 19, 1798. She was married to Mr. Dickerson in 1818, their mutual interest having been awakened while she was attending upon him when received in illness, as a transient guest, under the hospitable roof of her father. She was in every way an admirable woman, of sterling sense and consistent piety, and some of her son James' mental and moral qualities exhibited a fine blending of the maternal with the paternal characteristics. The marriage was a happy one, but of brief duration, she dying a death of Christian peace and triumph, February 11, 1830, at the early age of thirty-two. Her husband survived her six years, and having married again an excellent

and loving young woman, by whom he left two children, died in May, 1836, after a short illness, at the early age of forty-four.

The fruit of the first union was six children. They were Anne Eliza, who afterwards became Mrs. Gilbert Colgate; Thomas, who for twenty years has lived in Chicago, a member of (Dr. Everts') the First Baptist Church, having been converted a short time before James, under the preaching of Elder Jacob Knapp, in New York; Sarah Grace, who married Samuel B. VanDusen, of Philadelphia, but who for many years has lived in New York City; John, who was brought up in New York, and has been a successful merchant there for many years; James, who at the time of his mother's death was about four years old; and an infant that survived its mother but a short time.

The death of the mother partially divided the family for a time, Anne Eliza, Grace, and John being brought to the home of their grand-parents in New York, while Thomas and James remained with their father in Philadelphia. The second marriage of their father reunited them for a season. But the death of their father, in 1836, again broke up the household. Many friends and relatives from New York attended the funeral, among them the uncle, Mr. James Stokes, from whom he was named, and who for many years in after life generously aided and befriended him. He brought James, now nearly eleven years old, with him to New York. James stayed a short time with his grandmother, and in the Autumn was sent with his brother John to New-



burgh on the Hudson, to attend the Academy in that place. Here they remained three years, boarding with Mr. James, a Baptist clergyman, and spending their vacations with their grandmother in New York, or with their elder sister, Mrs. Gilbert Colgate. As their father had left but a small property, their uncles thought it best to invest it, letting them know nothing of it until they should come of age; they themselves, therefore, paid the bills for the boys' board and instruction, while their grandmother furnished their clothing.

During all these early years James was known as a bright, kind-hearted, and truthful boy. His word could be thoroughly depended upon, and any plausible excuse for wrong-doing manufactured by his companions was instantly stripped of its disguise, and lost, discountenanced, and like falsehood showed, as his honest tongue responded to the paternal appeal, "Come, Jimmie, get up into my lap, and tell me just how it was." The child was father of the man, and rarely has this prophetic quality of childhood been clearer in its utterance, or more sure in its fulfillment.

## CHAPTER II.

### EARLY LIFE IN NEW YORK, AND CONVERSION.

On James' return from Newburgh, his uncles, practical business men, who had achieved their own fortunes, conceived it best for him to enter upon some employment that should prepare him for the business life to which they considered him destined. He was about thirteen years of age, and though small of stature, was active, intelligent, and full of common sense and practical philosophy. His uncles found a position for him in the dry-goods store of a Mr. Thomas Pattison, on the corner of Division Street and the Bowery. Mr. Pattison, though a Moravian, did not carry any Moravian scruples into his business, and was hard and stern toward his clerks, from whom he exacted abundant labor for very scanty pay. It was the duty of little Jimmie, slight and delicate in frame, to take care of the fires, bring up the coal through a scuttle in the floor from the cellar, take down, in the raw, cold mornings, the heavy shutters from the windows, keep the store in order, run on errands, wait on customers, and, in fact, do all the drudgery that generally falls to the lot of the youngest and smallest boy in the store. He received for the first year of this service nothing but his board. He slept, during



this time, on the counter, his bed consisting of pieces of cloth, without any pillow; yet he slept the sweet sleep of youth and labor. He took his meals at Mr. Pattison's, near by, being sent round after the return of the master and the older clerks, to make the best of what was left. It was not long, however, before Mrs. Pattison discovered the loveliness of the character to whose physical wants she was ministering, and nice little "tid-bits" thoughtfully put away for him, and a warm plate-full just from the oven, often evinced her kindness, and called forth his gratitude. As his work was not harder, nor his pay less than that of some of the other boys, he made no complaint.

James, during this time, rarely saw his relatives except on the Sabbath, when, dressed in his Sunday suit, provided for him by his grandmother, he met them with bright looks and a happy heart. Slender and delicate in health he had pride and pluck that would not admit an inferiority in capacity of work to stouter boys. Though often sickly, and living in conscious orphanage, he was rarely sad or desponding. His buoyancy of spirit was almost unfailing; he was grateful for having something to do; he had lost his parents too early to allow him fully to estimate their worth, or the absence of parental care; "and," he added, when questioned on the matter, "after my conversion I was happy nearly all the time." Thus his friends could scarcely suspect that he was not comfortably situated in the store, and receiving just the discipline which he needed; as he told them nothing of his hard-

ships, they could not, of course, relieve them. He often, indeed, received little presents from them of articles of clothing, and sometimes his grandmother, or one of his uncles would put a silver half dollar into his hands, a much larger sum thirty-five years ago than now. Still his supply of money was of the scantiest. The tempting doughnuts displayed in the shop windows, sold, with their accompanying cup of coffee, for five cents, he often turned reluctantly away from, though beheld with hungry eyes and an empty stomach; as his sensitive and fastidious appetite refused much of the food that was indulged in by heartier boys, and a substantial boiled dinner, or one of pork and beans, but mocked his hunger with the mere name of a repast.

His later habit of prayer was already formed and strictly observed. His closet was a corner of the coal-cellar, and he watched anxiously for the coal-scuttle to be empty, that he might go and have "a little talk with God," and ask Him to keep him patient under continual provocation; honest amidst the business untruthfulness constantly practiced around him; and successful in pleasing customers and earning his living. The frequent scoldings of his master made him apprehensive that he was duller than ordinary boys, and would never amount to any thing; and this apprehension led him to constant prayer for help from above. Many of his friends have heard from him his "parasol story." Two ladies one day came into the store looking for parasols, and Jimmie did his best to display the merits of his articles. The ladies hesitated about

taking them, as they wanted two not only similar in style, but identical in shade. James saw Mr. Pattison watching him from the rear of the store, and knew well the sharp words that awaited him in case he failed to make a sale. He had seen parasols at a store near by from the same factory, and told the ladies that if they would select one, he would try to match it, and take them to their homes. They acquiesced and gave him their address. When they had gone, Mr. Pattison said gruffly, "Well, a big sale you made; you will be a money-making merchant." Jimmie replied that he thought he would sell them yet. "Very likely!" was the half-sneering response; "don't let the grass grow under your feet while you are gone." Thus encouraged, he hastened away, found a parasol of the desired shade, and started for the home of the ladies. On his way the prayer was constantly on his lips, "Lord help me, do help me to sell the parasols!" And the boy always believed that the Lord helped him, and it may well be questioned whether his faith was not the deeper philosophy, and whether it is not right and wise to believe that the God who suffers no sparrow to fall unnoticed to the ground, did help an honest-hearted praying boy to sell his parasols. At all events he sold them, and when he modestly handed the money to his employer hoping for some commendatory words, the gruff reply was, "Well, you sold them, did you? 'Tis a wonder." Such were the daily, almost hourly, trials of the tender-hearted little fellow in his faithful and almost unintermitted labors. The store was

kept open until eight o'clock, and on Saturday evenings until after ten o'clock; then he used to mend his clothes, and sometimes even his shoes, as best he could; and he used laughingly to recount the bitter disappointment with which he once discovered that he had spent a long evening in mending his much-worn pantaloons with a blue patch, instead of a black one, making them even more unsightly than before. During the Winter he needed many articles of clothing, but cheerfully went on his way with the few that he possessed. Why the brave little boy did not let his friends know the necessities which they would have hastened to relieve, it is not difficult to imagine. His buoyant spirit made light of these merely outward evils, and his sensitive nature shrank from unduly taxing the generosity which, he felt, had already made him so largely their debtor. Meantime his uniformly neat appearance and cheerful manner prevented them from suspecting the straits to which he was driven.

His strength of principle at this early time is illustrated by the following incident. It was more customary then than now to send goods to houses for inspection, and James was once sent with two pieces of silk to a house on one of the avenues. In talking with its inmates, he noticed their singular deportment, yet in the innocence of his guileless youth failed to understand it. But it suddenly occurred to him that this must be a disreputable house, such as he had heard the larger boys speak of, and further reflection confirmed his suspicion.



The women ordered a certain number of yards from each piece, and he was glad to get out of the house with his parcel. On returning with the order, and being directed to measure off the goods and take them home, he replied, "I will measure them off, Mr. Pattison, but I can not go to that house again." "What is the reason you can not?" rejoined Mr. Pattison. "Because, sir, it is a wicked house, and I will not go there again." "The very reason why I sent you, Jimmie; you are the only boy in the store whom I can trust to go there." But he would not go, and — "Thank the dear Lord" — added the narrator, "it is the only time that I ever saw the inside of such a place." Few boys of thirteen would have had the principle and courage to obey their consciences in refusing to be employed on such an errand; still fewer, perhaps, would have had any conscience about it.

Shut out largely from the sports and amusements familiar to most boys of his position in life, and doomed through all the seasons to nearly unremitted drudgery, he yet had one regularly recurring season of purest recreation and unalloyed enjoyment. The morning cry of the newsboys with their Sunday papers, breaking on his dreaming ear, signaled the return of God's day of Sabbath rest, and he sprang from his counter in the glad anticipation of his twelve hours' intermission from anxious toil, and twelve hours' revelling in the bliss of an earthly heaven. The peal of the church-going bells that followed was responded to with joyful eagerness, and the thrill of delight which they awakened

vibrated through all his after experience. The "sweet evening bells" of the poet awakened no such sacred enthusiasm as did in future Sabbaths that morning melody that recalled to him those oases of peace and joy amidst the dreary solitudes of the great city. Nine o'clock found him in the Sabbath-school, at the Tabernacle, where W. W. Everts, then a young man, was the pastor. He loved to study the Bible, and to join in singing the Songs of Zion. He then attended the preaching service, went in the afternoon again to the Sabbath-school, staying to the prayer-meeting which followed, and, after dining with some of his relatives, returned joyfully to the evening service, with its introductory prayer-meeting. He retired happy in the recollections of the day, grateful for the privileges he was favored with, and strengthened, morally at least, if not physically, for the struggles of another week. Possibly the religious service was overdone; yet the revelation of the boy's nature was a beautiful one, and excessive religious devotion is, perhaps, in our day too rare to demand severe criticism. We need scarcely set up a warning finger-post at this point of James' example.

All this time he was any thing but cantingly, or even austere, or even professedly, pious. He overflowed with merriment; jokes and comicalities, funny stories and witty rhymes were ever on his lips, and everything innocent and beautiful drew forth his heartiest sympathy. Yet he seemed in his nature religious; he gravitated naturally to the true and the right, and exerted uncon-

sciously on all around him a beneficent influence. The clerks in the store, while they spoke lightly of his devotion to the church and the Sabbath-school, yet loved him and respected his principles. One of them, twice his age, having become sick and been obliged to leave the store, sent for James to his home in New Jersey, that he might talk with him on religion. James obeyed the summons, read the Scriptures, prayed with and instructed him, and had the happiness afterwards of learning that he, a lad of fourteen, had been the means of leading his former associate to the Savior. This was after his conversion, yet he would never have been thus sent for but for the confidence and affection which his previous conduct had inspired.



## CHAPTER III.

### CONVERSION.

To the reader of the last chapter it will appear that James scarcely needed conversion, and the heading of this will seem like a misnomer. Perhaps it is so. Some natures are so finely constituted that it is hard to tell where the religion of nature blends with the religion of grace; where the "almost" becomes the "quite;" where the garment of unwonted human loveliness is touched into spiritual beauty by the hand of the Divine Adorner. Such a transformation every believer has undergone; a John as well as a Paul. The realms of natural and of gracious excellence seem conterminous, yet an unfathomable gulf lies between them, and across it leads only the "living way that has been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus." Whether our young hero had as yet actually made this great transition, or whether his seeming Christian virtues were but the fruits of a happily constituted nature, it is fortunately not necessary for us to decide. Enough that James, with all his spontaneous piety, did not yet regard himself as a Christian; and he looked to the second year of his stay in the store as the eventful period in which he experienced the great change that made him a child of God and an heir of Heaven.

Of one who was before so near the kingdom of heaven, it might have been confidently predicted that this blessed consummation was not distant. The happy event took place in connection with the preaching of Rev. Jacob Knapp, who in the Winter of 1839 and 1840, held a series of meetings with the First Baptist Church in Brooklyn. These meetings were largely attended from New York, and among others James frequently attended them along with the family of Deacon William Colgate. The meetings were subsequently renewed in the New York Tabernacle, and attended by a powerful revival. James was among the subjects of the revival, and, uniting himself with the church, began not, possibly, a more really, but a more avowedly Christian life; certainly a life that never henceforth faltered in its devotion to the cause of Christ. But we let him tell his own story in the following letter, written from Wilmington in 1862, to Samuel Colgate :

WILMINGTON, *March 5*, 1862.

MY DEAR FRIEND: How many pleasant and how many tender associations did the well-known chirography on the envelope of your letter of the 28th ult. awaken! Starting at the old office in Dutch Street, where I was wont for awhile to "copy" your letters and mail them, I soon ran back to old John Street, where the forms of the loved dead and those of the loved living mingled again in all the social and religious joys of twenty years gone by, and I thought of Ann Eliza, and Gilbert, of William the brother, and that sweet little sister, the youngest of all. But these seemed to have faded upon

my memory to some extent. Not so your mother and sister Sarah—two of the warmest and truest friends I ever had, at a time when I needed them, oh! how greatly. Your father seemed ever to me a companion of about my own age, so simple-hearted, so genial and so companionable was he. He used always to take *my* arm when we walked, and with a sort of cosy way which seemed to say, “just we two;” and off we would trudge, he seemingly enjoying my talk, and jokes and stories, as much as I enjoyed his. These three, mother, father, and Sarah, live in my memory well defined and embalmed, I think, forever. My happiest hours for years together, were in their company. *You* have doubtless forgotten that in 1840—almost a quarter of a century ago—a little boy was found upon his knees, in the old Mulberry Street lecture-room, after most of the audience had retired, sobbing as though his heart would break, and trying to offer one little prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Your father asked old Mr. Whittemore whose boy it was, and he did not know; and as you bent down to give a word of comfort and advice, you asked the convicted little sinner his name, and he sobbed out “James Dickerson.” The next day the old Bowery rang with a new song,

“Oh, how happy are they  
Who their Savior obey!”

By the grace of God I shall sing of those days in heaven! It was indeed the beginning of “a new life” to me—being “born again.” So, Sammie, you see it is rather dangerous to touch any chord in my heart that vibrates back to that time, and there are few of my past associations that do not. And now let me answer your letter before I forget it! \* \* \* Make my kindest

regards to Mrs. Colgate, and tell her you all *owe* me a visit, and I shall be very glad to have you "pay up," for we are *needing* the visits just now.

Affectionately Yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

About two months elapsed between his conversion and his baptism, some of the deacons feeling that in the case of one so young the genuineness of his change should be attested by the most decisive evidence. During this time he labored zealously in the Sunday-school, spoke in the prayer-meetings, talked to his companions in the store of his new hopes, and invited them to the meetings with him, setting, meantime, to all about him an example of truth and purity. His employer sometimes taunted him with the uselessness of this new-found piety and devotion to the church, and intimated that it was spoiling him for business. Yet when James gave utterance to the already conceived thought that he might one day become a preacher, he changed his tone, and reprobated the idea of his exchanging his present business for one for which he had no capacity. In truth, he thoroughly appreciated his excellent qualities, relied on him beyond any other of his clerks, reposed in him the amplest confidence, and, when James finally left for Hamilton, offered him large inducements to remain. When James left, he had to employ two persons in the place which he had occupied.

James had, however, yet some severe trials with him. On the evening on which he was to appear



before the church, he asked Mr. P. to request one of the clerks to close the shutters and attend to the matters that generally devolved on him, as he was obliged to go to meeting. Mr. Pattison replied: "No, I will not; and I should like to know *what* obliges you to go to meeting." James said that he was to come before the church to relate his religious experience, and the church officers all expected him. "Very well," was the rejoinder, "you can not go. You have had too much religion all winter, and it is just spoiling you; and I may as well put a stop to it now as at any time. You may put up the shutters and stay in the store." "I am sorry to disobey you, sir," replied James, "but it is my duty to go to the meeting, and I shall go." "You can go then," said Mr. Pattison; "I shall not want you any longer." "Very well," was the reply; but after a moment he asked: "Shall I come back and spend the night here?" "Yes, but you may go in the morning, and I will find some one in your place who is less full of prayers and hymn-singing, and thinks a little about business." It was a somewhat dark outlook as James turned from the store, after committing himself in trustful love to the Master, who would not forsake him, and asking Him to soften the heart of his employer, or open to him a place elsewhere. To throw himself in dependence on his relatives, who might, perhaps, censure his course, was scarcely to be thought of. He went to the meeting, chiefly anxious whether the church would receive him, and be satisfied that he loved the Savior. The question of his worldly fortunes sank into small importance

to the young pilgrim beside the question of his admission into that palace Beautiful, whose inmates were the children of the Great King. Smiles and tears have alternated with each other as he has told, with all his touching pathos, the story of this critical event of his life.

But one so true to his Savior could not be deserted by Him. In the church all were satisfied as to the genuineness of his religious change, while standing—on account of the shortness of his stature—on one of the benches, he told in his straightforward and childlike way how he had found and loved the Savior, and longed to preach His gospel. The trembling with which he waited at the door for the result of the discussion on his case, was changed to ecstatic joy as he received the announcement that his experience was satisfactory, and that through baptism he was to enter the portals of God's earthly house. The baptism that followed was the symbol of a genuine profession which he never regretted, never dishonored, never ceased to adorn.

James went back to the store thanking the Lord for His goodness in turning the hearts of the people towards him, and trusting that a path would be opened before him in the morning. When, the next day, he had taken down the shutters and put things in their usual order, he expected, on the entrance of Mr. Pattison, some hard, unsympathizing words and a hurried good-bye. But something had softened the merchant's heart, and he said: "I told you you could not stay, Jimmie; but, as you are going off to that school by-and-by, you may as



well finish your time with me." The result was that he remained with Mr. Pattison until he left for Hamilton, and was henceforth treated by him with more consideration and kindness, perhaps from the fact that he himself had gone, first from curiosity to hear Elder Knapp, and afterward had become an occasional interested listener.

James' mind was now fixed upon the ministry, although his wishes were as yet sanctioned by no formal action from the church. He studied the Bible at all spare moments, and thought out sermons as well as he could, which, he said, "was not very well." He tried his hand on the "glorious" text, "For God so loved the world," etc.; but, unable to discuss and amplify it, he finally said, "Well, that is the whole of it; God did love the world, and proved it by sending his Son, and I don't know what more can be said." Still, as he reflected that ministers *can* and *do* preach from the text, he fell into doubts whether Mr. Pattison's incredulity as to his preaching capacity was not right after all. He did not then know that such early barrenness is a very common precursor of later fertility. Meantime, he maintained his conviction that God had called him to preach, and cherished a secret hope that the way to an education would yet be opened to him. To the questions of his Sabbath-school teachers and his relatives whether he felt as strongly the assurance of his call, he replied confidently that he did. Among his relatives, many of them not religious, there was much skepticism regarding his fitness to preach. Some scarcely thought the Lord would call

boys who had no money to pay for their education ; some had the common notion that the desire to go to college was little else than a desire to escape work. No doubt, his smallness of stature favored the general skepticism. It was difficult to believe that a frame so slight and delicate was united with a caliber that would be adequate to so weighty an office. When asked if he really believed that he was going to be "a smart man," and what were his reasons for the belief, he scarcely knew what to say. He did not consider himself specially gifted, had been for some time out of school, and yet would frankly confess that he thought he had some qualifications for the ministry, and felt assured that *God had called him* to it. This was his only solid standing-ground. Nearly all things outward conspired to dissuade him from his purpose ; some thinking his health not strong enough ; many having no confidence in his "boyish enthusiasm," and few giving him an encouraging word. His grandmother did not fully concur in her views with James ; she deemed, with her sons, his undertaking a rash one, yet her excellent sense and Christian feeling made her cautious in her opposition, and gave great weight to her opinions. One Sabbath when the matter was discussed at the dinner-table, she said : "We must not judge harshly of James and his enthusiasm about preaching. If God has called him, He will open the path before him ; and he may do more for his Master as a plain preacher than if he became a wealthy merchant. Money and worldly

success are not all that is worth living for ; a much higher ambition is to live above self, for the world and for Christ." After this the opposition to him was less constant and bitter ; and his uncles, thinking he might be actuated by higher motives than they had credited him with, looked on his course with greater kindliness.

In relating before the church his experience at conversion, James had distinctly avowed his already kindled desire to preach the gospel ; and even then some had received favorably and treasured up his words. Another formal hearing before the church, in regard to his desire to preach, resulted in disarming all opposition, and securing to him the approval of his brethren in his chosen course, while all felt moved by his love and zeal and his determined manner as he declared himself "bound to preach the gospel." He went now joyfully forward in his work, while awaiting an opportunity to begin his studies. From many friends he met with interest and encouraging words. Miss Sarah Colgate, an invalid daughter of Deacon William Colgate, whom multitudes in New York remember for her many virtues and charities (though she moved only as wheeled about in her chair, and being lifted to and from her carriage when she went to church), and who befriended many young candidates for the ministry, regarded James with especial interest, and won his gratitude by many acts of kindness shown to him through long years. This year, also, he received for his services in the store fifty dollars in money, besides his board, probably the first money

that he ever earned. From this sum he bought nearly all his clothes, and gave liberally to missions and to all objects for which collections were taken up in the church and Sabbath-school. He also bought at a second-hand store a few books to aid his religious studies. With their help he sketched plans of sermons, and preached them in the cellar to imaginary audiences. He would tell an amusing incident of one of these preaching services. Having amplified on the several points of his discourse, and proceeding with great animation to his closing appeal, looking up, as if to a collection of unconverted young people in the galleries, his ear caught a smothered titter, and then a roar of laughter, from a company of boys in an adjoining cellar. The curtain instantly dropped upon the scene, and the abashed young Demosthenes vanished through the scuttle with magical rapidity.

## CHAPTER IV.

### RESIDENCE AT HAMILTON.

James now made his preparations to go to Madison University, the Baptist institution for literary and theological culture, at Hamilton, Madison County, New York, to pursue his studies for the ministry. From the estate of his father he would receive about fifty dollars a year, which would pay for his board (in the public hall), while he hoped to earn something, as many students did, towards his tuition, clothing, books, and other necessary expenses. Of his fifty dollars received from Mr. Pattison he had little left, especially as Mr. P. took several dollars from the sum to buy new panes of glass, to replace the broken ones of which none of the clerks knew any thing, and for which James, who had care of the shutters, was held responsible. At their parting, however, Mr. Pattison told him that he had been very serviceable to him, that they all loved him, and that, if he did not like study as well as he expected, he would be welcomed back to a position in the store.

His good-bye to Mrs. Pattison, when it came, was much more pathetic. The "dear old soul," as he used to call her, cried and sobbed, telling him that she loved him like one of her own children, and



praying the Lord to bless and prosper him in all his ways.

Mr. Pattison, in conversation with some of James' uncles, had told them that he perhaps had better go ; he was too honest to become a successful merchant, and *might*, religious as he was, become a good preacher. It is hard for the uninitiated mind to conceive a man thus unblushingly stigmatizing both himself and his profession. James' older brother, Thomas, who had been converted a little earlier than himself, though, with others, he doubted the wisdom of James' course, yet, unwilling to deter him from what he deemed his duty, wrote the following letter to Mr. J. Edmunds, then financial agent of Madison University :

NEW YORK, August 27, 1842.

DEAR BROTHER EDMUNDS: When you were in the city last, I had some conversation with you in reference to my brother James' entering upon a course of studies at Hamilton. His engagement with his present employer being nearly terminated, I am led now to write you on the subject. I believe I informed you that he had about nine hundred dollars in property, and at interest, which bring him in yearly about fifty dollars. He feels willing to spend all he has, if need be, when it comes into his possession, so as to gain an education. What course had he better pursue ? He will, no doubt, come recommended by the Baptist Tabernacle Church, as they have had his case in hand. Any information communicated from you will be thankfully received.

Yours very respectfully,

THOMAS STOKES DICKERSON.



Some weeks after, Mr. Thomas Dickerson received the following reply :

HAMILTON, September 21, 1842.

DEAR BROTHER DICKERSON : I have just returned from the West, and found yours of August 27th on my table. I can only speak as an individual member of the board of managers, but I have no doubt that if your brother comes on and can pay his board bills, which will amount to but fifty dollars a year, he will be waited on for his tuition. We must be personally acquainted with him, however, before we can pledge ourselves to any thing. My advice, then, is, if he is determined on preparing for the ministry, and the church approve of it, that he muster twenty-five dollars to pay the expenses of the first term, and come on and test his mind to see if he can study. That decided in the affirmative, he will find a way peaceably, or make one forcibly.

Yours sincerely,

J. EDMUNDS.

A certain amount of money was then raised, James' clothes were put in order, and he was ready to start. If it seems strange that his friends stood somewhat aloof from his plans, we must remember that, some time having elapsed since he had been at school, it was by no means certain that he would be successful in his study at Hamilton, and still less certain that he would ultimately be a successful preacher ; that to his uncles, practical business men, not allied with him in denominational sympathy, his quitting the sure path of business for a doubtful and difficult course, leading to a doubtful issue, seemed rash and unwise : and we can not wonder that they

endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, and gave him the alternative of being aided by them in entering on a mercantile career, or struggling as best he might in his pursuit of an education. They did not, and could not, know the moral pluck or the mental caliber of the youth, and few, in his genial, sunny, boyish manner, could read or divine the real strength and manliness of his soul. But persist he would and did. With his hand in his Heavenly Father's, he entered on the path that lay in cloud before him, and never faltered. A slight but characteristic incident attended his setting out. His valise was packed with his extra suit of clothes, and his railway ticket bought for Hamilton. With one bill in his purse, which was to pay for some books when he reached his destination, and which he did not like to break, and having no change to pay for getting his trunk to the boat, he went into the street, shoveled in a load of potatoes for some one, and used the quarter of a dollar which he received in getting the requisite conveyance for his little baggage. So narrow was the margin of his pecuniary resources: but trusting in the Heavenly guidance, with the double buoyancy of youthful and Christian hope, he set forth with no misgivings as to his future.

When he reached the beautiful village, and went up the hill to the buildings where in after years he spent so many happy hours, his heart swelled with joy and gratitude. The autumnal season is especially beautiful in Hamilton. The landscape lay in the mild and delicious beauty of early Autumn. The

hills that girdled the sleeping valley, with their foliage just tinged by the September frosts, and the cool, fresh, invigorating air, seemed like inspiration. During his whole life, as each succeeding Autumn returned, it sent his memory back to those bright fall days at Hamilton. The companion of his journey was John Colgate; and James went to his room with a heart beating high with glad hopes of the future, yet trembling lest he should fail of the desired success in his studies. He laid down his valise, and, kneeling, thanked the Lord for bringing him in safety to the place so long and eagerly anticipated, and implored His help and guidance in all the work before him. He was seventeen years of age, but looked much younger. John Colgate was his only acquaintance, and amidst the throng of students he felt a stranger among strangers. Still, whatever his surroundings, his heart was in the sunshine. Amidst the darkest troubles he was at once grateful and hopeful. He was sensitively alive to every alleviation of the present, and caught with youthful faith every promise of the future. And especially the more he was beset with outward trials, the more constantly did he betake himself to the One Sure Friend and Helper, and, rejoicing in the Lord, encounter cheerfully the perplexities which were thrown across his pathway. He whistled and sang as, in the morning, he unpacked his valise, and went for his list of books and instruction as to his duties.

Among the lessons assigned to him was one in the Introduction to the Latin Grammar. Opening the book, he began to commit to memory the first page.

It was hard, slow work. His mind, so long unaccustomed to study, could not easily get back into the old track. After trying unsuccessfully to commit to memory the two first pages, he closed the book in discouragement, and condemned himself for having, dunce as he was, dreamed of qualifying himself for the ministry. But he returned to the attack, and when, going the next morning with trembling to his class, he found that he had his lesson better than any other member of it, he felt a glad revival of his courage. His experience mirrors a thousand others' experiences both in its despondency and its joy. The following is his first letter to his brother in New York:

HAMILTON, October 13, 1842.

DEAR BROTHER: According to promise, I embrace the first opportunity of informing you of my safe arrival at the Institution on Tuesday night at half-past eleven, P.M. John Colgate and I tumbled into bed about midnight, and did not get out again until seven o'clock in the morning, when we immediately began the process of fixing our room, which, by-the-by, takes in a very extensive amount of sweeping, dusting, rubbing, and washing. We were glad enough when the merry bell of the Institution rang out its call to breakfast. When I arrived at the Hall (which is the name given to the dining-room), I found some hundred students eating away, as papa used to say, as though they had holes in their heads. To look at them, you would take them for a rollicking set of customers; but I tell you there are hearts among them beating high with love to God and to their fellow men. After breakfast we resumed our work, and by night had our room looking like a palace.



Last evening we went to the village of Hamilton, and bought a broom, oil, and a few small articles, after which we went into the prayer-meeting. After the meeting, we went up the hill, had worship in our own room, and retired. This morning, for the first time, we assembled in the chapel. Professor Maginnis read the Bible and a hymn, and Dr. Nathaniel Kendrick offered prayer, and afterwards made a short speech to us. The lessons for the different classes were then given out, and we were dismissed. To-morrow I have a recitation at half-past six, A.M. John and myself have adopted four o'clock as our hour for rising, and the alarm clock has been let into the secret, and performs his part admirably.

Then he gives an account of his expenses, tells his brother the titles of the books he shall need, being able to purchase most of them at second-hand, "all in good order, neatly covered with black cambric." Then he says: "I shall be compelled to buy a standing-desk, which will cost me from two to three dollars, as the older students advise me to have one as necessary to my health." He adds:

Please put in that guard-chain which is in that little heart-box, as I want something to put keys upon; and think of those drawers, and a flannel shirt, and that large overcoat which I forgot; and I shall want a pair of thick, heavy boots for Winter. I am well, contented, and happy; but I feel there is more need of prayer now than before. When the boat pushed off from New York, I could not help offering up an inward prayer to God, for helping me through so many difficulties; and when for the first time I entered the walls of the Institution, my heart found its way to the Author of all good. Now, my brother, I know you have a great interest in



my welfare ; but do I have your prayers? I hope so. Give my love to all my friends, and thank those who helped me to arrange my affairs in getting off. Give my love to Grace and John and all the rest of the relatives. Let me hear soon about those books; and pray for

Your brother,

JAMES STOKES DICKERSON.

With his rapidly enlarging acquaintance "little Jimmie Dick," as he was dubbed by the boys, became a universal favorite—a good singer, a capital mimic, full of fun and frolic, yet never indulging in personalities or coarseness. His appearance was that of a perfect gentleman. His neat, trim figure, clustering hair, bright, sparkling eye, joyous expression, and genial manner, were constantly remarked and commented on. A new life was opened to him. To be with congenial young men, pursuing the same studies, and many having the same hope and purpose with him of preaching the gospel, was a perpetual joy. His round of college duty, and his round of religious duty, were alike delightful, and discharged with equal fidelity. His class studies were prosecuted with ease and success, while the meetings for prayer, both in the college and in the town, were faithfully attended, and his old vocation of Sabbath-school teacher was speedily resumed. And Hamilton itself, in its quiet, its seclusion, its picturesque beauty, furnishing a delightful contrast to the din and turbulence of the great city, in the heart of which he had been living, seemed almost to lap him in an earthly Paradise, and spread before him "a perpetual feast of nectared sweets." He loved

Nature, as a nature like his must, with an unwearying affection; and he often carried his books into the charming groves near by, or wandered alone, or in congenial and glad companionship, over the picturesque hill-sides of that lovely spot, and feasted eye and heart on the scenes of varied beauty which were everywhere spread before him. Meantime, if his voice was the merriest, his laugh the heartiest, his speech the wittiest, his stories the drollest, and his fun the most rollicking in all the joyous circle, none but the veriest ascetics and bigots of devotion ever felt any painful or even uncongenial contrast with the unaffected piety which was quick to display itself in seasons of devotion. Undoubtedly, very strongly contrasted qualities formed in him a rare and extraordinary union. His delicate and sensitive nature responded with instant thrill, like an *Æolian* harp, to every varying breath of impulse and influence, so that transitions which are difficult and unnatural in most men were easy and natural in him. He joined the *Adelphian Society*, one of the literary fraternities of the Institution, became one of its active members, a frequent writer of sparkling pieces, both in prose and verse, for its paper, and in time one of its best presiding officers and leaders.

As to his finances, it is scarcely justice to him not to make a few characteristic statements. He went into debt somewhat during his first year, and felt much perplexity as to how he should meet the expenses of the next. He had practiced the most rigid economy, and done all in his power to earn money for his incidental expenses. He took all the

care of the rooms, study and bedroom, which he and his room-mate occupied, and sawed, split, and carried in all the wood for their fire. He did the same, also, for other students, receiving for it a small weekly compensation. His books he kept so nicely that, when he had done with them, he could sell them to those in the lower classes for two-thirds of the price, and use the avails in purchasing needed new ones. The ladies of the Tabernacle Church sent boxes of clothing annually for Hamilton students, especially through the efficient influence of Mrs. William Colgate and her daughter Sarah. In these boxes there was often a package for James, and for these, and many more especial and sometimes costly kindnesses, they earned his life-long gratitude. It can scarcely be amiss here to insert a brief notice of these excellent women, extracted from Dr. Geo. W. Eaton's "Historical Discourses" on "Devoted Women," published in the Jubilee Volume of Madison University.

"I can not refrain from naming in this connection Mrs. Deacon Colgate. She, like her husband, took the institution into her heart, and was in labors abundant, to supply its wants and the necessities of the students. She was evermore busying herself about the Hamilton Institution, gathering funds, endowing scholarships, furnishing rooms, and in other ways contributing efficiently for its benefit. The Female Society in the city of New York, auxiliary to the Education Society, was for years, through her agency and that of others, a bountiful source of help to the Institution. Simple justice to the facts

of history require, along with the mention of the mother's name, that of her daughter Sarah, who was, in full sympathy and kindred work, a true yoke-fellow with the indefatigable mother, and when the latter's illness laid her aside, went on bravely with work for Hamilton. She was a remarkable instance in which physical infirmity, that would have seemed to justify an entire cessation from bodily labor, was not allowed to interfere with ceaseless activities for the advancement of benevolent objects in the family, church, and society. In all these she was a 'burning and a shining light.' So deep was her interest in the Institution, that she came to visit it, to attend its exercises, and inspect its rooms and general condition for herself, notwithstanding the peculiar inconveniences to her of travel. She was greatly endeared to many of the students who had enjoyed her counsel and encouragement and good offices in her father's house. She richly deserves special mention among the sisters who effectually served the cause of ministerial education at Hamilton."

But even with such aids, James' finances were often of the narrowest. An occasional present of a few dollars from friends or relatives, supplied some pressing wants, but the times were not few when, while the wants kept on, the money utterly fell short. On one occasion he was surprised to find at the postoffice a letter from an un conjecturable source, charged with a postage of eighteen pence, precisely the entire amount of his pecuniary store. It was hard to meet so enticing a friend (letters were rare luxuries with him then) in such an



unwonted spot. It was very hard to deprive his pocket of its last jingle of coin, and he hesitated much between the pleasure he coveted, and the price he had got to pay for it. The social element conquered, as with him it infallibly would. The letter was paid for, opened, and displayed to his rewarded and wondering vision what made him richer than Cræsus, at least richer than ten times the sum would have done in later years—a five dollar note. His fancy swam with the thought of the luxuries this sum was going to bring him. His worn coat re-tailored, his winter boots re-soled, a new neck-tie to make himself presentable in church; a hundred little things—in short, if the well-to-do people knew how often the five dollars which they don't know what to do with would clear up the whole dark horizon of some struggling child of want and worth, how often would the charity be forthcoming which is now thoughtlessly withheld! To cite an instance in point, from the experience of our youthful student. When he was in New York on vacation, the thoughtfulness of Miss Sarah Colgate, in asking him about his teeth (which displayed no external defect), and sending him to the dentist to incur at her expense a large bill, secured to him perfect soundness in these essential organs almost to the end of his life. In the above case, the only words accompanying the note were, "From one who feels a great interest in you." Who was the donor he never knew. The cup of cold water, given in secret, will yet have its open reward.

James had sometimes from his New York friends,



as will be seen later, lessons on economy which seemed rather superfluous, and might remind one of the reply of young Sheridan to his father, when he threatened to cut him off with a shilling: "Yes, father, but where is the shilling to come from?" So when tantalized (not to say, *tauntalized*) with the exhortation to practice economy, he might be tempted to retort, "Yes, but where is the economy to come from?"

It is, perhaps, proper to add to these financial details some account of the shifts he was driven to in regard to his wardrobe. If the features it presents lack somewhat in dignity, they will conduce at least to the truthfulness of our portraiture. During the six years of his college life he never had a new suit of clothes, until just before his graduation. Beside the occasional parcels in the box from the Tabernacle, his uncles not unfrequently gave him their partly worn garments, in which, being well made and of good material, he generally contrived to appear respectably dressed. He sometimes laughed with them subsequently, over the expedients to which he resorted in adjusting his transferred habiliments. One of his uncles being rather tall, and the other quite short, he would unite the long vest of the one with the short trowsers of the other, and *vice versa*, and, with the aid of India rubber suspenders, haul up or pull down, as the case required. At one time, receiving a handsome coat with very long sleeves, lined with quilted brown silk, he at first purposed to get the sleeves shortened at the tailor's, but afterwards

decided to turn the quilted silk back, let it look like a handsome cuff, and quietly pass it off as the latest New York style—which he did. The deception, if there was any, was in the *act*. At one time, for several months, he wore his room-mate's everyday suit on Sunday, and was thankful for the privilege. All this may well be supposed any thing but grateful to the flesh of a young man, sensitive, gentlemanly, social in tastes and habits, a favorite in the best classes. Yet he submitted to it without repining for his Master's sake, received every kindness with tenderest gratitude, and yet, while thus humble with a Christian's humility, he never disparaged himself or compromised his dignity, or failed to appear the polished gentleman that he intrinsically was.

One more point may be mentioned here: With his slender frame his stomach was delicate and fastidious, and boarding at a public table (whose cost was but a dollar a week), it may be supposed that he often sat down to unpalatable meals, from which he as often rose hungry (or worse). He thus laid the foundations of a dyspepsia which followed him through many years, and to which not improbably the local difficulties that for years kept him out of the ministry, might be largely traced. James' trials in regard to food had indeed commenced earlier; but for that there was no public responsibility. It would not be beneath the managers of a public boarding-house for students to see to it that the supplies are nutritious, healthful, well cooked, and abundant. Both the physical and the

mental nourishment go, in nearly equal proportions, to the forming of the future thinker and actor in the world's affairs.

In entering on his educational course, James had to commence at the bottom. He spent two years in the preparatory department, and then passed through the regular four years' collegiate course. He entered in the Fall of 1842, and was graduated in 1848, with the highest honors of his class, the valedictory oration being assigned to him by the Faculty, but declined by him when he found that it was going to provoke ill feeling among some members of the class. His theological studies would have occupied two years longer, and in fact he returned and spent part of the year 1848-9 in them, but an affection of the throat, which seized him before he left college, now became so severe as to compel him to abandon all hope of preaching, and with this to abandon also his further course of theological study. His college studies, amidst all the drawbacks we have referred to, were pursued with uniform delight and success. His vacations were spent in New York, among his friends, who always cordially welcomed him to their homes and hospitalities. One of his vacations he spent in the office of his brother Thomas, who was absent in Philadelphia visiting their newly married sister, Mrs. Van Dusen. James had been also invited, but he preferred to forego his own enjoyments in favor of his brother Thomas, and during a long and hot summer he attended faithfully to his business while he enjoyed himself in the city of "Brotherly Love." The brotherly love of James

cheerfully submitted to the sacrifice, especially in view of the many kindnesses which his brother had rendered to him.

But few of James' letters are preserved, especially of the later portion of his college residence. From such earlier ones as we have we take a few extracts (chiefly of 1843). They will shed light upon, and receive light from, the preceding details. His brother Thomas, we may premise, being considerably older than himself, thought it sometimes his province to give the younger scion of the house some needed advice, over which they both made themselves merry in later years. In replying to James' first letter, of Oct. 22, 1842, he says:

\* \* \* \* "I hope our correspondence may be a continued one, and prove for mutual improvement and edification. I am not fond of writing for the sake of writing, and filling up a sheet with gossip of the day, or such news as in itself is of no value. Mine to you shall be a series of letters of advice, by which I hope to produce some good in the mind of the reader. My letters will be regularly numbered, and the next, No. 2, will soon be sent."

Then he gives some general advice in regard to the purchase of books, and adds:

You speak of a standing desk. I have thought considerably about it, and am inclined to think it an article you had better not get. You say you can purchase it for three dollars, which I allow is very cheap, but I think I could have a shelf made of a proper height, to study by, which would not cost me one dollar. I am the last person to refuse you any amount you may need, but I



want you to commence right. I want to impress upon your mind the necessity of practicing the most rigid economy in your situation; of getting only what is absolutely necessary. *Recollect that seventeen standing desks will more than pay your board.* \* \* \* I shall think of you often. Many eyes will be upon you. Apply yourself closely to study. Live near to God in prayer, and may success attend your path.

Your brother,

T. STOKES DICKERSON.

The reply to this letter, dated November 7, 1842, is the only other letter we have of this year, from which we quote a few sentences :

\* \* \* I was much pleased with your intended plan of writing me a series of letters, and I hope with you that they may prove beneficial to us both ; *but*, I do hope they may contain some profitable *news*, as well as advice and counsel. I think I have great cause to be thankful to the Giver of all good, for kind relatives and friends, who are always ready to impart good advice. As for my feelings I can say I am happy and content. I enjoy pretty good health and spirits, and as for the last I sometimes think they run almost too high; but I hope that when I get well settled I shall be more sober and watchful. \* \* \* The suit of clothes that Uncle C. sent, fits me nicely. I shall soon need my winter boots, and if you have an old pair of slippers you do not use, I could find use for them. As regards the standing desk, you must exercise your own judgment about it ; but I feel the need of something of that kind every day. I have but little spare time. I rise at four o'clock, and retire at nine o'clock, have a recitation about daylight. I want some good steel pens and letter paper, which you can



put in with the other things when you send them, for I must soon write to some of my uncles, Grace, John, grandma and *aunties*. I do not know where to commence. Give my love to them all ; tell them to write ; it does not take me as long to read a letter as to write one.

\* \* \* What shall I tell the faculty in relation to my means? Remember me continually at the throne of grace, that I may be devoted to the service of my Master, and that I may walk humbly and close with God.

Your affectionate brother, JAMES.

JANUARY 25, 1843.

DEAR BROTHER THOMAS: As a favorable opportunity presents itself, I embrace it in addressing a letter to my brother. Day after day I have asked the post-master, Is there not a letter for me? but have received a discouraging reply. The answer of my letter to Grace which I expected to receive immediately, has not arrived; and the letters of "advice" promised by you, and joyfully anticipated by me, have not as yet reached me. But this is enough repining; I shall yet hope to see you a *man of letters*. I get along very well as regards my studies, the *Greek* text is rather difficult, but the remainder of my studies comparatively easy. But "one thing is needful," for which I long and pray daily, a closer walk and communion with Jesus. I realize that however my mind may be stored with useful knowledge, if I have not genuine piety and ardent love to God and my fellow men, "it profiteth me nothing." The revival which has been in progress in the village for some time past, has revived in my soul the wish to be engaged in the labor of the gospel ministry. I now feel a greater desire than ever before to share in the work of the world's conversion. I have attended a number of meet-

ings at the village, some of which have been very interesting. About thirty have been converted, backsliders have been reclaimed, Christians awakened, pastor aroused and encouraged, all moving on in harmony and success, and the Lord is still working among them. I have but little care on my mind now, but oh, my leanness in the sight of the Lord! Pray for us (John Colgate and myself) that we may grow in grace, and that our attainments may be greater and higher.

I am very thankful for those shirts, drawers, etc., you sent me by Joseph, and the twelve dollars in cash. The shirts were plenty *large*. I have purchased a pair of thick, heavy boots, and a history; paid my taxes and a number of incidental expenses, and have four dollars remaining. I have not mentioned a small *desk* that I have bought. It is about two feet high, and placed upon my table answers for a standing desk. It cost me *one dollar*. I have been at Elder Knapp's several times; was there the evening previous to his starting for Washington. \* \* \* Give my best love to Uncle James, Aunt C., and family. I desire very much to receive a letter from them. Also my love to grandma, my other uncles and cousins, and friends in the city. Give my love to Grace and John. Tell John he must write me a good long letter. (Since commencing this I have received one from Grace, dated Philadelphia.) I hope in your next you will give me some account of the transactions at the Tabernacle, and how things are proceeding at the new church. And tell me how you enjoy yourself, and what are your prospects in regard to mercantile life. Fill a good, large sheet *foolscap*, with anything profitable that will tend to awaken my mind. After a long three months of study, a little wearied with the monotony of college life, to receive a letter

from *home*, filled with news, seasoned with good advice, what a treat! \* \* \* I need nothing just now but a few handkerchiefs, which I can do without until the Spring vacation, which is about ten weeks distant, and if I do not go to the city, the others can bring them up with them. Professor Conant arrived here safely. The buildings on the north and west side were illuminated, as he arrived at ten P. M.; a committee was appointed to bring him from the village. He came in a large sleigh, accompanied by Professor Eaton. The students formed one long procession to receive him, many of them with torches, and each "tipping his beaver" as he passed and the professor returning it.

Your brother in double bonds,

J. S. D.

MARCH 20, 1843.

DEAR BROTHER THOMAS: Your painful silence has awakened in my heart disappointment and anxiety; disappointment at not receiving *promised* letters from you, and anxiety as to the *cause* of your silence; whether sickness, business, or whether you had entirely forgotten that you had a little brother pent up by the tremendous snow-drifts, upon the *now* bleak hills of Hamilton. Date of your last letter to me, November 23, 1842. No comment is necessary. Since that time I have written you, but have received no answer. I find it difficult to write often, and when I *do* write, and receive no answer, it is rather discouraging. \* \* \* I have been very happy lately, and enjoy more of the presence of Jesus, and often hold sweet communion with my Savior at the mercy seat. Privileges of a high religious nature abound at this institution, and there is no barrier (but a cold heart) which need keep us from a corresponding height

of religious attainment. There is a great improvement in the state of piety, here. Prayer is more frequent, and more full of faith. Meetings are multiplying; feeling is deepening; and the work of the Lord progressing. Several are anxious about their salvation, and two have recently found the Lord. The last two meetings of the "Monthly Concert of Prayer," have been very interesting. At the last one the students were addressed for a few moments by Brother Bailey, a Baptist minister, and an agent, I believe, for the cause of missions. He was rather an ordinary looking genius, and we did not expect to hear anything interesting from him, but he had spoken but a few moments when the eyes of all were fixed upon him, and silence reigned in the chapel. As he advanced the interest increased, and still deepened as he endeavored to arouse the same spirit in the hearts of his hearers that had burned in the bosoms of many, who had but recently occupied the seats before him, and were now in other lands, laboring for the heathen. He was fired with his subject, and before he sat down the smothered feelings of those who heard him broke out in sobs, and tears trickled down the cheeks of many, who, it is to be hoped, may yet plant the *cross* in the midst of a heathen world, and preach Christ crucified to those whose altars are now dedicated to the worship of "unknown Gods." \* \* \* The Spring vacation commences on the nineteenth of next month, continuing four weeks. I would like to know the wish of my friends as to what I shall do at that time, as of course, I shall be governed by them. If I stay I am obliged to board in the town, as the Hall is closed during vacation, but I can board for one dollar and a half or two dollars a week. I suppose sister Grace has returned from Philadelphia. Give my love to her, and remind her of her



promise to write me the remainder of her adventures in the city of "brotherly love." I long to hear from Johnny; what is he about? Give my love to him, and tell him I shall hope to receive a letter from him soon. \* \* \* My money has all been spent, and I owe a little here. My clothes I can make last till vacation, when, if I should not come down, they could be sent by *chum*. \* \* \*

APRIL 4, 1843.

MY DEAR BROTHER: As yet I have received no intelligence as to what I shall do during the coming vacation. I expected a letter by Dr. Kendrick, but received none, and feel anxious, not knowing how to act. John Colgate thinks I had better prepare to come, as you will expect me as a matter of course, but I shall remain here unless I hear from you to the contrary. \* \* \* I hear rather strange news from New York in regard to you and Gracy; both over head and heels in love. Be careful. "Look before you leap." If you would know my authority, it came in a letter to me from the field of action. \* \* \* We had an excellent monthly concert yesterday. There is glorious news coming in from every part of our dear country; thousands upon thousands have been converted. Many of our brethren here, have broken away from their studies, and gone out to aid in preaching the great gospel of salvation, and others expect to be about the same good work during vacation. How I wish I had the ability to preach! I would gladly "go and do likewise." There is a brother here who expects to preach next vacation to some good country church, and says he will take me with him, and that if I can not preach, I can sing and pray. \* \* \*



APRIL 18, 1843.

DEAR BROTHER: As I have received no intelligence from the city authorizing me to come home, I shall stay here and board in the village. The postman has been tired out with my frequent calls, and when he sees me coming, before I have time to ask for a letter, he sings out in a husky voice, "Nothing for you," and I trot off with a lip quivering with sorrow and disappointment. I have been looking for a letter so long, to know whether I shall pay you a visit or not, that I really feel downhearted. \* \* \* I owe something for altering pants, something in the village for fixing a coat, and one or two other debts, in all about three dollars and fifty cents.

My class will soon be examined by a committee from the Faculty in Latin, Greek, and History, and also Classical Literature and Geography.

Since penning the above I have received a good long letter from you, and was very well satisfied with its contents. I feel a little anxious in regard to your going into business on your "own hook." But if you pursue a lawful business, lawfully, I think there is little danger. Ask the blessing of God upon every transaction. Move cautiously, deal generously, mind your own business, and avoid law-suits as you would a counterfeit V, and there can be no doubt but that you will be prospered. The Bible says, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." If you would be rich in every sense of the word, give to the cause of Christ. Look all around you, and those who have given the most to the poor, or to the church, have received in payment an hundred fold, and are the richest men. I hope and pray for your success. Pray that I may enjoy the presence of God.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

HAMILTON, May 27, 1843.

\* \* \* I received a letter from Gracy during vacation, telling me she would get any thing for me I needed, if practicable. You can show her the list I sent by John Colgate if you choose. Should you send any thing, place them in a box on board of one of the canal boats, as that appears to be the safest way. When you ship them, please write me; otherwise they might lie in the store-house without my knowledge. Write the name of the captain and the boat. I need a vest and a pair of pants very much. My vest is *very much worn* and mended, and I have borrowed of John and Alvah on extra occasions. I bought a pair of shoes in the village, and had them charged in the name of John Colgate. I spent my vacation very pleasantly, and was glad to see chum when he returned, and all the students appeared very dear to me when they came back to the Institution. I am now well under weigh with my studies. I have commenced Bullion's Latin Grammar and Cæsar, which try me considerably, and shall soon begin Xenophon and Sophocles' Greek Grammar. Do not forget to send up my Leghorn hat that I left with you. I want the one with the high crown and narrow brim, colored, and *not* the one with the broad brim, unless you can send both. And now I would like to ask a few questions, which you will, of course, answer. How do you enjoy religion? This is a question of much importance and solemnity.

“Religion is the chief concern  
Of mortals here below.”

How are you proceeding with business? “He that driveth not his business, his business will drive him.” When is the next letter of “advice” coming? Acts xx, 35 —

“So laboring, ye ought to support the weak.” Remember that I always feel grateful for advice, and perhaps did you know the good which might result from the imparting of advice and counsel, you would not be so backward. \* \* \* I feel more and more the importance of living holier and aiming higher, and, if I should approach the field of action, and it be found that my talents are ordinary, if I only have the spirit of the living God and the love of Jesus in my soul, and good to my fellows and the honor and glory of God be my motive to action, I know that I shall prosper. Pray that I may be enabled to bring myself, and all that I have and am, as a sacrifice to the altar of God, consecrating all to Him and His cause.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES STOKES DICKERSON.

A severe epidemic now broke out among the students, called the “black tongue fever,” and James was among its victims. His illness, however, was unusually short, owing, as he believed, to his employing homœopathic remedies. One of the leading physicians of the place had recently become a homœopathist. James had become much interested in the discussions which had arisen, and became so far a convert to the new practice that he now employed Dr. Douglass, its newly declared champion. The medicines, faithfully administered, worked like a charm; and James was speedily on his feet, while many were prostrated for weeks, and some disabled for an entire term. He remained through life an enthusiastic advocate of that system, and, when his way was hedged up as a preacher, studied it care-

fully as a possible profession. He writes to his brother :

\* \* \* Since last I wrote you, I have been very sick as also my chum, John. He was taken down with a high fever last Saturday, and I on Sunday. I went for the doctor last Sunday afternoon to come up and see John, and when he came he found me also "lying and sick of a fever." \* \* \* I am much better, although still weak. No tidings yet from you in relation to my things. Do write soon and let me know all about them, even though they may not be sent at all. As you write so very seldom, I take it for granted that you attend closely to your business. All this is well, but still one thing recollect, you have a duty to perform to a little brother at Hamilton, beset with temptations of nameless variety, grappling with many difficulties, forming a character, *a character for life*, yea, for eternity.

HAMILTON, August 2, 1843.

DEAR BROTHER THOMAS: Again, after so long a time, I place myself in a writing posture to address you a few lines. Of course you are aware that the term closes in two weeks, and therefore we have no time to lose in making necessary preparations. You are also aware from the statements I have sent you that I have no money wherewith to defray the expenses of the journey home; and, when I arrive in New York, I know not which way to direct my steps, or what place to call my home. I hope you will write soon and inform me in relation to this affair. I have entirely recovered from the effects of the influenza, and now feel as well as before. The influenza has been very prevalent here, and few have been so fortunate as to escape it, thirty or



forty students being sick at one time. Ten months have nearly spent their length since I left New York, and the dearest friends I have. I hope the time has flown as happily with you as with me. In a few days I shall be examined in all the studies of the year, and I look forward with no little satisfaction, and perhaps some pride, to the title of *Higher Academician*, and, after nine months more of study, to that of *Freshman*. As you, too, have been to college, you can realize something of the many pleasant emotions that are aroused in the breast of every student at the mention of the title, *Freshman*. But I hope God will ever keep me from those motives that actuate the ambitious student, one who strives to make advancement in knowledge merely from selfish motives. No, while I study the laws of science, may I not forget the laws of God; while I pore over books of philosophy, may I never forget the Book of Books, the Bible. "Get wisdom, and with all thy gettings get understanding." O, may I always remember and obey the injunction of Him who said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." As I have told you the state of my physical health, I must say something in relation to the spiritual. I have not enjoyed as much of the presence of Jesus this term as I had hoped. For the last month I have thought very much about home. Perhaps when reading or writing I would stop, and before I would recollect myself I would have spent some time in thinking about home. But I hope soon to be there, to see my friends and be with them, and my brethren and sisters in Christ too. How rejoiced I shall be to see them again, and meet them within the sacred walls of the Tabernacle! May the time hasten on! This home-thinking has had a tendency to draw off my attention from serious things, and



then again the thought of being among my friends, and my brethren, with the eyes of many upon me, has stimulated me to greater exertion, that my walk and conversation before them might be such as becomes the follower of Christ, and the student for the ministry. And if I would walk well, I must walk in the Spirit. I know that I shall bear a part in your prayers.

I have got along very well without the things that I sent for, as I received an umbrella, some stockings, bosoms, etc., from the box sent by the ladies at the Tabernacle last winter, but which did not arrive here until this term, being in a boat that was frozen in the canal. But Alvah Buckbee gave me a pair of trousers that were too small for him, and John Colgate has lent me other things that I have needed; so you see I have been well taken care of. I would like very much, Thomas, to have you come and spend the last week of this term here, and I know you would enjoy yourself.

\* \* \* \* \*

I suppose Gracy has returned from her Niagara trip, with the rest of the company. Give my love to them all, and to other friends and relations in the city. I hope you will succeed well in business. I have made your attention to business the imaginary excuse for your backwardness in writing to me. John Colgate expects his father and mother here at Commencement. How is my brother John, and what is he about? Has he made his usual trip to Newburgh this term? I suppose he is as wild as ever, and enjoys himself as much as ever. I wish him success and enjoyment, but above all I wish that his feet were off from those slippery places. I would rather see him in the ark of safety than, if death should come, struggling under the eternal weight of God's wrath. *Have* we done, and

*are we doing our duty* in respect to him? Should he be taken in death, as soon at the farthest he must be, are our skirts clean from blood?

Your ever affectionate brother,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

We might enlarge much upon his residence at Hamilton, a happy and eventful six years of his life. But what we have said has, perhaps, embraced the most prominent points, and we can only say further, in general, that, as a student, a Christian, and a man, in every relation, he bore with him constantly the confidence, the esteem, and the affection of all. We can not more fittingly close this imperfect sketch of his life at Hamilton than with the following portraiture furnished by his classmate, the Rev. A. H. Burlingham, D.D., as just and truthful as it is discriminating and tender:

NEW YORK, April 28, 1877.

DEAR MRS. DICKERSON: My acquaintance with your late husband began in Hamilton in the Spring of 1843. He entered the Institution there in the Autumn before, and in the Autumn following we became classmates, and remained such through a long course of study. I can not claim that I was more intimate with him than were others of our classmates, yet I may say that we knew each other well, and were much together in our student days. As, during this period, he exhibited the same striking and noble traits of character as in after years — traits which will be elsewhere more appropriately dwelt upon in the memorial you are preparing — it would be out of place for me to attempt any exhaustive treatment

of them in the few lines you have asked me to contribute, and which I tender as a service of love.

In looking back to the student days of my friend, I think of him first, perhaps, as a *genial, enjoyable companion*. He had that flow and goodness of nature which made him agreeable. There was that indescribable something in his organization which drew people to him. There was no resisting the attraction of the cheery pleasantness and genial humor which he ever displayed. He was a universal favorite in the college. His associations were not limited to his class, but he was sought alike by advanced men and by beginners among the general body of students. No one was better known or more beloved by the whole college brotherhood than was Mr. Dickerson. The peculiar elements essential to popularity inhered in his nature. He did not try to impress himself. His influence came without exertion; it was spontaneous and unconscious. He charmed by a magnetic soul, and sweetly bound the men to him by his sympathies. Herein lay the secret of his marvelous power to fasten people to him. No meeting of his class was complete without him. To the general social life of the Institution his contributions were always large and welcome. His spirit was chivalrous. His sense of honor was intuitive, and therefore delicate. He knew the meaning of justice. Kindness and largeness of soul ever characterized him in his student relations. We all loved him for his good nature and full-heartedness. We all respected him for his manhood and for his fidelity to principle. There was that talismanic quality in his being which threw a spell around every one in his presence. That his companionship was a perpetual enjoyment the general judgment and experience of the men with him in college would affirm.

Mr. Dickerson is also remembered vividly and gratefully by his fellow students in Madison University because of his irrepressible humor and wit. Love of fun was a most marked element in his organism, and his student life can have no adequate portraiture unless this element be brought into prominence. His college friends would not recognize the likeness with this touch absent. He readily responded to the challenge of mirth in others, but as well, and perhaps better, enjoyed making others happy by the sallies of his own. He certainly possessed great power and was the master of great facilities for provoking merriment in others. This ability in him often rose to the rare fascination of genuine wit. The ludicrous side of things he saw quickly and keenly, and often portrayed them with consummate effect. In the class, in the public meetings of the college men, in the literary societies, before the professors, in the more retired but no less memorable gatherings of the few in rooms where innocent enjoyment crowned the hour, Mr. Dickerson, if the proprieties of the occasion allowed it, was not expected to open his mouth without throwing all within reach of his words into a state of mirth, to say the least. In this he always succeeded admirably well. There was a facetious vein in his being, a laugh-witchery which was contagious. Into the atmosphere which he created when this element was dominant and working, none could come without being made brighter and better. In hits, in repartee, in a story, he was notably happy. But he was too kind to be severe, too true a gentleman to wound, and too pure a Christian to be vulgar or coarse in his wit.

While he was piquant, sometimes quaint, in his intercourse with students, successful in his take-offs, boiling over with proclivities to allowable mischief, he was ever



the considerate gentleman, and the courteous and kind Christian in all his college associations. Underlying this pleasantry, this fascination coming from a mercurial touch and tone, which God so graciously gave him, Mr. Dickerson had an *earnest, sturdy, strong nature*. This was as apparent in his student days as in his perfected manhood. His convictions were ever serious, bravely pronounced, and stoutly defended. His life purpose when a student impressed the men of the college as being well defined and thoroughly honest. Whenever any thing decided and bold, especially if it were useful and needful, was to be done, he was never found wanting. He was always among the foremost and most aggressive in projecting and executing measures for the benefit of his class, his literary society, and for the more public good of his college. No one could charge him with selfishness. In his ambitions, he was honorable; in his spirit and action, he was benevolent; in his connection with classmates and students generally, he was generous and self-forgetful. Hold to his point he ever would. From maintaining what he considered right positions in cases ever arising in the college, he never shrank. He was tenacious of what he thought right and quickly inventive in expedients and arguments for defense and aggression. When thrown, he had the happy ability of striking upon his feet; for he was intellectually nimble, withy, rebounding. His vigor, his varied resources, and ready command of them; his fluency, aptness and strength of speech, made him powerful in the advocacy of any cause he espoused. If sometimes simply from generous impulse and enlisted sympathies he took a position, he was as fair and honest as he was strong in all attempts to carry his point. With the staunchest and most stalwart of his fellow students



he did not hesitate to measure swords when he thought himself right, and when any suffering interest needed his help. He was heroic. He had in him, in extraordinary degree, that rare but needed thing we vulgarly call pluck. He did not propose to be defeated in any good work he undertook. In the execution of a cherished purpose, involving his own or the welfare of others, he was self-sacrificing and indomitable. He went on doing, daring, suffering, till he reached the goal he sought. The college life of my dear friend, though the retrospect is had by looking over the multifarious work and teeming memories of over thirty years, looms up to me, and to his class, and all the men of the "Hill," as a grand life. It was earnest, true, purposeful. It was full of the glowing prophesies of which his signal life-career was the sublime fulfillment. As a scholar, Mr. Dickerson made creditable attainments in all the branches embraced in the curriculum of study. He graduated with honor to himself and to his "Alma Mater." While a student, he proved himself to be a thinker vigorous and inventive, a writer able and brilliant, a speaker eloquent and effective.

In moral and religious character, Mr. Dickerson was (when at Hamilton) a young man of salient excellence. The *morale* of his character was striking. That it never suffered deterioration amidst the peculiar influences and temptations of college life, is the highest proof of its settledness and strength. In thought, in language, in conduct, during his entire course of education, he evinced the possession of a most refined moral sense, and the most unswerving moral principle. In respect to religion he did not fail of maintaining a character consistent with the most avowed profession. He was conscientious. He had genuine piety, but not a particle

of cant. In class and general prayer-meetings, he was a ready and refreshing participant. In every way, viewed as a Christian, he was cheerful and helpful. With his nature he could not have been otherwise. Religion hallowed and toned his natural exuberance, so that he took on a type of Christian character which goes far to explain the secret of his great usefulness through life.

Many of the class of '48 have passed away; some of us still are toilers in the vineyard; but none, living or dead, were more beloved and honored in their academic years than was our dear brother, the now sainted James S. Dickerson. Yours very truly

A. H. BURLINGHAM.

## CHAPTER V.

### LIFE IN NEW YORK.

For some time previous to James' graduation, his throat was so seriously affected that he feared he should be unable to enter upon the work of preaching, even if the way were providentially opened. To his great sorrow his fears were realized. Not only did his physicians forbid his speaking in public at present, but some declared that he would never be able to preach. He went, therefore, into the office of Deacon Colgate, where he remained for two years, rendering, amidst a circle of loved and trusted friends, good and thoroughly appreciated service. During this time he became engaged to Miss Julia P. Spencer, the adopted daughter of Julius A. Spencer, of Utica, New York. He had met her at the house of a common friend, Mrs. J. Osgood Pierce, in Hamilton, where her beauty, her musical abilities, and her lovely character, had won his heart. Her parents were Episcopalians, and naturally opposed to their daughter's allying herself with a Baptist minister. Their personal opposition, indeed, disappeared with an acquaintance; yet his non-connection with "the Church" was still an insuperable obstacle to the union. The parents thus remaining inflexible, for nearly a year all correspondence was dropped

between the lovers, who, however, were devotedly attached to each other. In this, as in all things, Mr. Dickerson's course was straightforward and honorable. He kept up no concealed correspondence, and sought no clandestine meetings. He could trust this, as all other matters, to the Lord, with the assurance that if it was His will, they would, in His own time, realize their hopes and wishes. His faith was not disappointed.

In 1850, Dr. M. B. Anderson, then a young professor in Waterville College, Maine, but who was driven from his post by an affection of the throat, somewhat similar to that which had compelled James to withhold himself from his chosen profession, came to New York for the purpose of purchasing in part, and taking the editorship of the *New York Recorder*. In conversation with Deacon Colgate regarding his plans and prospects, he one day asked the deacon if he could introduce him to some capable and trustworthy young man who could become joint proprietor with him of the paper, and take the management of its business interests. The mind of the latter immediately recurred to James, who was at once sent for and introduced to Professor Anderson. As the result of the interview they soon became partners in the enterprise, and amidst many trials and discouragements labored together for four years in conducting what speedily became one of the ablest religious journals in the land. The extraordinary ability of the then youthful editor—giving splendid promise of the capabilities which he has since exhibited in other fields—were admirably

seconded by the business tact and sagacity, the tireless industry and the admirable judgment, of his still younger partner, so that the paper speedily lifted itself into a power recognized not only by the religious body of which it was the immediate organ, but by the entire Christian public. To the special obstacles which the paper had to encounter it is unnecessary here to refer: it is enough to say that the two co-laborers working harmoniously and efficiently, each in his own sphere, were by their joint labors placing the paper on the basis of permanent usefulness and prosperity, when the call of its chief editor to another, and possibly more important position, as head of the Rochester University, terminated the relation which had existed so pleasantly between them. The following letter from Dr. Anderson, referring specially to this period, sheds its light also on Mr. Dickerson's general character:

MY DEAR MRS. DICKERSON: My eyes are so weak that I am unable to work at night; and, as the night is almost the only time which I can command, apart from my official duties, for this reason I shall not be able to do what you ask of me in connection with the memoir of your husband. Since I left New York, twenty years ago, I have met Mr. D. but seldom, and our paths of labor have been entirely apart from each other. Our connection in New York seems to me like an inadequately remembered dream.

I first met Mr. Dickerson in New York, in the Winter of 1849-50, at the time when we were negotiating the purchase of the *New York Recorder*. In the Spring of that year I removed to that city, and from that time until



I went to Rochester we were intimately associated in business and labor. We were both without experience—he in the business, and I in the editorial management of a paper. As the older man, the serious responsibility of shaping the policy of the paper and preparing editorials, devolved upon me, while he attended to the finances of the establishment. Circumstances which I do not care to recall, made our position exceedingly difficult. Some feared, others hoped, for our failure; and our courage and powers of endurance were severely tried. I believe that each of us did the work ordinarily accomplished by two men. We reduced our expenses to the lowest point, and entered with all our energies upon the task before us. In all our difficulties your husband was always hopeful and loyal. Until his marriage he resided with us, and he always threw around him an atmosphere of good humor and cheerfulness which made him the light of our home.

In all our relations, I do not now recall the slightest want of harmony of feeling or action. He developed in the business the skill and tact which characterized him through his life. The experience in business, and the knowledge of men which he thus acquired, were doubtless one source of his success in the pastoral relation in subsequent life. His unfailing kindness of nature, and his facility in seizing the humorous side of life, relieved him from much of the friction which often wears out less happily constituted natures, and left him the control of all his capacities for effective action. His quick sympathy with the joy or sorrow of others gave him influence over all with whom he came in contact, and made him then, what he always continued to be, a universal favorite, whether in business or social circles. While we were associated, his time and strength were absorbed in

the business department of the paper, and he wrote but little. His capacity as a writer and preacher was developed subsequently to our acquaintance.

His success as a preacher and an editor came to me in the light of a surprise, and gave proof of latent capacity whose existence I had hardly been aware of. I know of few men who have possessed faculties readily adapted to so great a variety of work. He seemed equally at home in every place which he occupied in his somewhat checkered career. He had in perfection the "practical" intellect, and this developed into what may be best designated as administrative power. I never heard your husband preach, and I can give no analysis of the elements of his success in the pulpit; but I can readily understand the causes of his success as a pastor. He seized the characters of men whom he met almost by instinct. His wide experience in business enabled him to appreciate the temptations and trials of an average congregation, and meet their religious wants in a manner of which few men are capable. He was strong where most men, whose training is that of the study alone, are weak.

That knowledge of men, that round common sense which never can be obtained from books, is one of the strongest elements in the typical pastor. Ten men fail from want of the pastoral capacity and training, where one fails as a preacher. The study of the mind and heart, which is necessary to make a good pastor, is the best preparation for writing a gospel sermon. I imagine that the sources from which your husband drew the best elements of his pulpit power were the unwritten experiences of the plain men and women who form the bulk of every Christian congregation. That combination of mental and moral traits

which made him the favorite in social circles, and the successful negotiator in business, gave him control over the minds of his congregation, and made him the natural leader and organizer in all the work of his church. The great success of the Christian pastor is found not so much in what he does, himself, as in what he induces others to accomplish. These elements of mind in Mr. Dickerson were rendered effective, and received their direction and impulse, from a warm-hearted and unselfish devotion to the cause of Christ and the well-being of his fellow men. This resulted in an earnest and cheerful piety which irradiated his whole nature and made all his capacities, natural and acquired, completely available for Christian labor.

My intimate association with your husband is one of the memories of my life which I recall with sincere satisfaction. That the impressions which he left on others, in the various relations of his later life, were equally pleasant I have not a doubt. That the absorbing desire to do his duty by serving God and his fellow-men, which he showed when young, continued to affect him through life is obvious to all who have watched his career in maturer years. How cheerful and self-sacrificing, how affectionate he was in private life, those only, who knew him intimately, can fully understand.

Regretting that I can not render you more efficient service in the memorial you are about to rear in honor of your husband, I am

Yours very truly,

M. B. ANDERSON.

ROCHESTER, April 28, 1877.

After a time James' wooing affairs, thanks to his excellent character and business fidelity, began to

prosper. Mr. Spencer, the father of the object of his attachment, meeting him occasionally in New York in company with Mr. Anderson and other leading Baptists; seeing the important position that he was holding, and how thoroughly he commanded the confidence of his associates, found his objections to one who was outside of "the Church" gradually melting away, and at length entering his office made the welcome announcement that he was at liberty to resume his suspended intercourse with his daughter, adding that he was increasingly assured of her genuine and deep affection for him. James' heart bounded with a lover's exultation at the permission thus accorded; he lost no time in making a journey to Utica, and that he came back with a happier heart might well be believed by those who knew the thorough loveliness, both in person and character, of the lady to whom he was now affianced. About a year after (June 9, 1852) they were married. They took and fitted up pleasant rooms with a family in Brooklyn, where they lived more than a year, and until after the birth of their first child, J. Spencer Dickerson. They then removed to New York City, where Ada, their eldest daughter—through life a suffering yet patient invalid—was born.

During Mr. Dickerson's connection with the *Recorder*, he not unfrequently went on tours of collection, and for the purpose of procuring new subscribers for the paper. In these excursions he sometimes walked hundreds of miles, stopping as occasion served, and finding often poor lodgings and very indifferent meals. He never, however, yielded to



discouragement, maintained an unfailing buoyancy of spirit, and wrote letters so full of humorous and racy descriptions of his varied experiences, and repeated them orally on his return with such infinite zest and drollery, that the laborious and self-denying tour would seem to have been but the sportive frolic of a student's vacation. We mention this because it was a characteristic of his life. The shadow to him always had its sunshine; every event turned out to his happily constituted vision its brighter aspect; and what seemed an unmitigated evil was, by the alchemy of his joyous nature, transmuted into a blessing.

It may be descending a little below the dignity of our narrative, yet we can scarcely forbear giving an instance, furnished during his New York residence, and while he was connected with the paper, of that almost rollicking humor which was inwrought into his nature, and in a thousand innocent and merry ways was perpetually coming to the surface. Quick to discern the ludicrous, and gifted with great powers of mimicry, he of course almost always confined their exercise to the small inner circles in which he was thoroughly known, and in no danger of being misunderstood. None can doubt that the temperament is a happy one, if not unduly indulged, and always controlled, as in his case it invariably was, by thorough kindness. On the occasion we allude to, he stepped a little out of his ordinary bounds, and made one of his brothers the subject of his fun-loving propensities. The incident under the name of "the ferry affair," has become one of the



stories of the family. His elder brother, Thomas, on whom he played the joke, and who lived near him in Williamsburgh, thus relates it:

I had trouble with two Englishmen, "Jones and Lacham," and James knew about it. One night, about ten o'clock, I was returning from New York, and, just as the boat was landing, the night dark, and the wind high, a man wrapped in a cloak and wearing a slouched hat, pressed through the crowd and addressing me, said: "Have you much acquaintance here? I have just arrived from Europe, and was directed to Williamsburgh, on Long Island, to find my friends, Jones and Lacham." His voice was on a high key, and his manner and tone quite imperative. I told him I knew the family. They lived on Grand street, about two miles away. He asked me if I would not go there with him. I told him "No, you can find it by my directions." He was noisy and demonstrative; found fault with the customs of the country, and said that in England the people were more polite, etc. I concluded he was an English snob, with plenty of beer about him. I went with him to the corner and showed him his way. He kept his cloak about his face, and I was a little suspicious as to what he was, but did not suspect James. We parted. I hurried on toward home, and had not gone more than two blocks before he came switching around the corner from an opposite direction, and, coming abruptly up to me, stood in my way in a threatening manner, saying, "Sir, you have deceived me; I want you to go with me, and at once." He was dancing around me about ten feet off, making all kinds of gesticulations, and calling me a fraud at the top of his voice. I got angry, told him to clear out, and charged him with being drunk; said

I had nothing to do with him, etc. "Yes you have," he replied, "and I will make it hot for you. You have got my relatives, 'Jones & Co.,' in your power, and I will fix you." He would not let me pass, but as I went toward him, determined to strike him down and get by, he jumped into the street, threw his cloak about him and showed fight. I thought it best to retreat, thinking the man was a drunken lunatic. I ran, he after me. I made for my house, ran up the steps, locked the door quickly, and looking through the window blinds at the fellow on the sidewalk, got a glimpse of him that led me to believe for the first time that it might be James; but I was not certain about it, till he put on the cloak and cap, and imitated the voice of the Englishman, as he did on the ferry-boat.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RESIDENCE IN PHILADELPHIA.

At the end of four years the transfer of Dr. Anderson to the presidency of the University of Rochester, dissolved their relation and made necessary the selling of the paper. Mr. Dickerson now engaged in the business of bookseller and publisher, and established himself in Broadway, New York. Here he continued for two years, when circumstances requiring him to sell out, he became associated in the same business with Sheldon, Blakeman & Co. In 1856 he was appointed secretary of the American Baptist Publication Society; he accepted the appointment and removed to Philadelphia. After holding this office for four years, he became, in 1860, proprietor and editor of the *Christian Chronicle* of Philadelphia. During most of his life in Philadelphia he was a member of the Eleventh Baptist Church, of which Dr. D. B. Cheney was pastor. Dr. Cheney has kindly furnished an account of those years in which they so harmoniously worked together.

MRS. J. S. DICKERSON—*My dear Madam:* You ask me to contribute a few reminiscences of your late lamented husband's life in Philadelphia for the memorial

volume soon to appear. To no similar service could I be called that would be more congenial to my own feelings, or to which my heart would respond with greater delight. And yet, after the lapse of so many years, I fear that I may be able to recall but little of interest to the general reader connected with that uneventful period of Dr. Dickerson's life.

As an attached personal friend, and as the pastor of his sister's family in Philadelphia, he very naturally looked to me for information when the question of his removal to that city was first presented to him. The American Baptist Publication Society needed a depositary agent who should have in charge the business interests of the Society. Members of the board, myself and others, named Mr. Dickerson as the man of our choice for the place. News of this reached him in New York. Friends from Philadelphia called upon him, and in an unofficial way urged his favorable consideration of the subject, should it assume a definite form, as it gave promise of doing at an early day. At this stage of the proceedings Mr. Dickerson wrote me a long confidential letter of inquiry that now lies before me. It bears date June 11, 1856, and was written from the well-known book-store of Messrs. Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., of New York, with which he was then connected. After referring to the facts stated above, he wrote: "I suppose my friends, I mean my worldly business friends, would think me insane to talk or think of such a thing as accepting this appointment. But while my business prospects are bright and promise something for the future, I feel that I ought not to be satisfied with the amount of *good* I am accomplishing now. In the way in which business is now driven, especially in New York, a young man is almost necessarily so absorbed as to

unfit him for present usefulness, and his only hope, if he really desires to do good, is to do his best in a limited way, and after a while, when riches come, deal them out bountifully, and thus compensate for past inactivity. This is *the* reason why I do not feel exactly satisfied with my mode of life."

The italics in the above are his own. This letter reveals a marked characteristic of his whole life; an earnest desire to engage in present work for Christ and His cause. Soon after this, as chairman of a committee of the board, it devolved upon me to conduct the correspondence with him that led to his removal to Philadelphia in the Autumn of 1856. Though I have none of the many letters that passed between us now in my possession, yet I have this distinct recollection that his desire to engage in direct Christian work seemed to be his governing motive in accepting the place opened before him. In a long personal interview I had with him, he told me of his great disappointment in not being able to enter upon the work of the ministry, to which he had early consecrated his life, because of his bronchial troubles; and said that next to preaching the gospel, it seemed to him that he could best serve Christ and His cause by helping to create and circulate a Christian and denominational literature. That he entered the work of the Publication Society under the full conviction that he could there more *directly* labor to advance the cause of Christ than in the private walks of business life, I entertain not a doubt. And he was right in this view of the case. He was there at once brought into a close connection with a great number of Sunday schools throughout the entire field of the Society's operations. The Society had not then, as now, depositories in Boston and New York, Chicago and St. Louis. Hence the



Sunday schools, East and West, secured their supplies largely from the depository in Philadelphia. Mr. Dickerson at once saw that through this agency he could extend a helping hand to Christian workers over a vast field. And though he had never entered the ministry, yet his heart was in full accord with the work of the ministry, and he believed that in this place he could be a helper to many of his brethren who were toiling in poverty and in obscure places, with few opportunities for their own personal improvement. As it was a department of the Society's work to furnish to poor ministers libraries and other helps, it appealed at once to the best sympathies of his heart. It was this prospect of being brought into direct contact with Christian work that induced him to enter the service of the Society.

How genial and attractive he made our "Baptist headquarters" in that city it would be superfluous for me to state to any who knew the man, or who ever entered the "Rooms" while the business department was under his control. He was at once the welcome companion of the most cultured of his brethren, and knew how to sympathize with those whose lot was among the lowly. I think I can safely say that no one ever went to him, while there, for counsel and sympathy in vain. While abounding in genial humor and a playful cheerfulness, he at the same time was a wise, earnest, and safe counsellor. These characteristics early gave him a large place in the love and confidence of his brethren in that city. That he was a popular and successful officer of the Society I think would be the unanimous testimony of those now living who were then members of the board. I remained associated with him in this relation until the Summer of 1859, and I do not remem-

ber that his administration was ever criticised. We all felt that the work intrusted to him was in safe hands and was well done.

But Mr. Dickerson was brought into a closer relation to me, and my heart prompts me to speak of him in that relation. Upon his removal to the city he at once became a member of my church, and his home was but a single square from my own. Though he had been educated for the ministry, and in early life licensed to preach, yet he was known among us as a Christian layman. While his relations to the public caused him to be often called upon for special services by the churches and Sunday schools of the city and vicinity, yet I have always looked upon him as a model layman in his relations to his own church.

He was *loyal* to his own church. He recognized the fact that church membership involved obligations : that his covenant with his church was a reality, and not a mere form. Though he was poor and his income small, he at once assumed his full share of the financial burdens of the church and met it promptly. He also shared liberally with his brethren in meeting all the calls of benevolence that were addressed to them. The appointments of the church he regarded as including him. He gave his pastor the support of his presence, and his earnest attention and sympathy *twice* on the Sabbath, and *twice* during the week. Whoever else was absent I always expected to see him in his pew Sabbath morning and evening, and in his seat at the Wednesday evening lecture, and Friday evening prayer meeting. If called to go elsewhere to do Christian work his habit was to inform me, that I should not be disappointed because his place was vacant. In the prayer-meeting he was one of the best helpers I ever knew. He knew

how to speak "a word in season." He displayed wonderful tact; the power to adapt himself to the needs of a meeting. When the pastor introduced a thought or subject for the meeting, he was ready to follow in the same line. His rapid thought and ready utterance, his genial spirit and deep Christian love, gave him great power in a prayer-meeting talk. Some of the most fervid, stirring, melting appeals I have ever heard fell from his lips in these services.

He was with us during a rich harvest season in the church. For three years we had constantly in the congregation anxious inquirers and rejoicing converts, and baptisms occurred almost monthly during the entire time. The work began in the Autumn of 1855 and culminated in the great revival season of 1857-8. In carrying forward this great work after the first year, Mr. Dickerson was my constant and faithful helper. He taught a young ladies' Bible class, for whose religious welfare he labored most earnestly. He was with me in the inquiry meeting, among the converts, and in the more public services. That he won many precious souls to Christ during that remarkable season of religious interest, who will at last shine as stars in his crown of rejoicing, I have no doubt.

As may readily be inferred from the above Mr. Dickerson was loyal as a layman to his pastor. He knew how to hold up the hands of his pastor, and how to encourage his heart. He was not afraid or ashamed, on the one hand, occasionally to speak an appreciative word of a sermon or even of a prayer-meeting talk, or, on the other, to make a suggestion to the pastor *privately*, upon any point where he thought the public services could be improved. He was constant and earnest in

his endeavors to make his pastor strong in the church and the community

One chapter in the life of Mr. Dickerson, perhaps more than any other, endeared him to me and revealed the true manhood of the man. In the Spring of 1858 I found myself broken down from overwork, and my church gave me leave of absence for a half year to recruit. I at once determined upon a tour in Europe. Mr. Dickerson cheerfully consented to act as chairman of the committee on pulpit supply during my absence. His position in the Publication rooms gave him peculiar facilities for doing the work. Before leaving home I arranged with the pastors of the city so that it was easy for him to supply the pulpit the first half of the time of my absence, but the supply of the last half was practically left in his hands. I had often talked with him about making the trial of preaching, as I knew how his heart yearned for the work, but his bronchial trouble was so constant that he feared to make the attempt. Even the prayer-meeting talks mentioned above often gave him nights of great suffering. In talking with him about the supply of the pulpit during the last months of my absence, I said : "Brother Dickerson, preach yourself." When he urged the condition of his throat as a reason why he could not attempt it, I replied that he was among his friends who honored and loved him; that he need not go beyond his strength; that a brief service, such as he could conduct, would be much more acceptable to the people than other supplies that he might be obliged to accept. Months passed; the pastoral supplies for which I had arranged were exhausted; and Mr. Dickerson found it not easy to meet the demands of a large congregation from Sabbath to Sabbath with such sup-



plies as he could secure. At length a Saturday came when he had no supply engaged for the next day nor did he know where to find one. When considering what he should do he remembered the words "preach yourself," and he resolved that he would make the attempt. As he said to me afterwards, "I thought I could but fail; if my voice left me the people would know why I did not complete the service, and, in any event, I should show my good will." For years he had been accustomed to make notes or outlines of sermons in connection with his Bible-reading, for his own gratification (so fully was his heart in sympathy with the work of preaching), with no thought of ever being able to use them in the pulpit. He went early to his home that Saturday and made what preparation he could from some of these notes or outlines for the next day.

The Sabbath came, a beautiful autumnal Sabbath, and a large congregation met him. He preached with unexpected ease to himself, and to the great delight of the people. After the labors of the day, he said he suffered less than he had often done after a simple prayer-meeting talk. This settled the question of supplies. The people took the matter into their own hands; they rallied around him with a new interest; he preached Sabbath after Sabbath with increasing ease to himself, and to the great satisfaction of the church. It was like a revelation to him that he was so far able to surmount his bodily infirmity as to engage in the work to which he had early given his life, but from which he had been so long deterred. He was preaching to a church where his personal popularity was almost unbounded, and when the pastor was thousands of miles away. And here he revealed his true manhood. No service was allowed to pass without the most affec-



tionate remembrance of the absent pastor. He sought in every way to keep the pastor in his true position in the church, and to prepare the way for him to resume his work on his return. What he had been in my presence he was in my absence, and even more. On my return he was the first man to greet me with a "welcome home," and none seemed more glad than he to see me again in my own pulpit.

After this Mr. Dickerson was frequently invited to preach for different churches, and I have always regarded this experience as helping to prepare the way for his entrance upon the work of the ministry, to which he devoted the best years of his life, and in which he enjoyed so signally the smiles of Heaven.

In talking over our experience in Philadelphia, as we have often done in later years, Dr. Dickerson has said to me more than once in his humorous, playful manner: "My dear brother, I could easily have unsettled you in the Eleventh Church when I was preaching there, and you were in Europe. 'Possession is nine points in the law,' and I had possession while you were so far away that you could not interfere;" and then he would add seriously, "I should have despised myself while I lived had I not been true to the trust you reposed in me." I may add that absent pastors do not always find such fidelity in those whom they leave behind.

Mr. Dickerson bought the *Christian Chronicle* and became its editor and publisher. He was engaged upon this when he began to preach for the church in Wilmington, and continued it until he was satisfied that it was safe for him to settle as pastor, and devote himself wholly to the work of the ministry. With his surrender of the *Chronicle* he closed his labors in his native city, henceforth to take his place in the ranks of settled

pastors, leaving behind him a great number of warmly attached friends, not a few of whom preceded him to the heavenly land.

I have thus complied with your request to furnish you something of the life of your lamented husband in Philadelphia, for the memorial volume. You are at perfect liberty to use it or not as will best serve your purpose.

Yours fraternally,

D. B. CHENEY.

CHICAGO, October 5, 1877.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LAST YEAR IN PHILADELPHIA.

In the year 1859, Dr. Cheney, Mr. Dickerson's pastor, was given leave of absence for six months to travel in Europe, a committee being appointed to procure supplies for the pulpit during his absence, at the expense of the church. Mr. Dickerson, efficient as he was, and a favorite in the church, was made chairman of the committee. To relieve him, however, of care, Dr. Cheney himself, before his departure, saw a number of the Philadelphia pastors and engaged a supply for nearly three months of the time, Mr. Dickerson being expected to notify them of the day of their expected service, and for the remaining period of the pastor's absence to take himself the responsibility of procuring the required supplies. It happened that, soon after the previously engaged sources of supply had been exhausted, there came a time when no preacher could be found for the coming Sabbath. Plenty of clergymen "looked in" at the editor's office during the week, and assisted him abundantly in consuming with pleasant chat his valuable time, but none of them was found "available" for his needs on the Sabbath, as each had his own flock to look after. On Saturday afternoon Mr. Dickerson found himself obliged, as the only solution of the problem, to face the alter-

native of entering the pulpit himself. This was not exactly what he had bargained for with the absent pastor: long disuse had made preaching look formidable, and wellnigh an impossibility. But there was no escaping it. He went home Saturday afternoon, made his appeal for help to the well-known and faithful Helper, selected for the next day and re-studied a couple of sermons of which he had prepared the outline in former years, and on the following day, with a brave but trembling heart, ascended to the pulpit. His Helper did not fail him: the church were so delighted with the sermons that they immediately voted to request him to continue to preach for them until their pastor's return. He complied with their request, and thus re-entered, in a providential way that seemed accidental, that form of Christian work which had formerly been the object of his warmest aspirings; which for years past he had looked upon regretfully as a closed Eden; but which from this time was to be the joyful occupation, and to task the highest energies, of his life. The sermons which he preached on this occasion had been roughly sketched at Hamilton, and in breadth and power fell far below multitudes, perhaps the average, of his sermons in later years; yet we venture to give a few paragraphs from them, as furnishing some idea of the impressiveness of thought and diction, which so many delightedly remember as associated with an equally earnest and impressive delivery. In his highest and best moods Mr. Dickerson not unfrequently became in the pulpit almost sublimely eloquent.

One of the two sermons was from the text, "In the place where the tree falleth there it shall be;" the other from the words, "I would not live alway." In the former, after describing a forest where were living and dead trees, some decaying where they had fallen, he says: "Such is the beautiful figure in which inspiration has stated the solemn and momentous truth of our text. And what *is* that truth? It is this: Men are likened unto trees, and death the power which fells them. And as men die, so they must forever be. Whatever the moral condition of a man when he falls in death, that will be his moral condition forever. \* \* \* This was the sublime truth enunciated to the rapt evangelist when the apocalyptic angel cried, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." \* \* \*

Then he unfolds the truth of the text under two propositions:

1st. The tendencies of man's moral nature are downward; and

2d. That death in no way affects the operation of this law: that it can neither stop nor change its action. In the summing up, he says:

If a person die whose nature has been renewed by divine grace, then forever will this new principle be developing in that soul in higher and still higher forms of moral perfection. But if the contrary be true, what then? If man's nature *is* downward, if death does not change that tendency, then if death overtakes us while yet in our sins, eternally beyond the grave will our natures be unrenewed, and that law of degenerate pro-



gression be in perpetual exercise. We are not speaking of the eternal *punishment* of the wicked, but of their eternal enmity to God. That enmity is gross during their lives, but at death it begins a career of unrestrained and increasing perversity, growing more and more bitter, more and more malignant as the ages of eternity unfold. But think you there can be happiness for such a spirit in any realm of Heaven? Would not such a spirit make Hell its chosen hiding-place? Say you such a soul will be punished, but not forever; it will be purged, and purified and fitted for Heaven! Sad and fatal delusion! Tell me, if ye can, how long will be the duration of such an experiment? Unfit for Heaven at death, the soul will be turned into perdition—and, if at death deserving of flames, and if in its nature becoming worse and worse, sinking deeper and deeper in the gulf of the lost, tell me, I pray you, how long this terrible progress in all that is vile shall deepen its guilt before it will be pure enough for Heaven? How long shall the banished spirit urge its downward flight in the deep, dark, bottomless abyss before it shall reach the shining portals of the heavenly city?

No, no, no; Mercy, blessed messenger of Jesus, knows no such way to pilot souls to Heaven as takes them through the burning tide of some future Hell! On this side the grave she calls them with the sweetest tones; all the day long she pleads, and her mantle is wet with the damps of the night, and the dew of the morning.

Cold mountains and the midnight air,  
Witness the fervor of her prayer.

She cries after men down to the very borders of the grave, but there she pauses—they pass beyond her reach—she looks after them across the dreary waste of eternal years—she weeps—but can not follow! All her many

gracious influences which rendered life one long continued season of pleading and restraint she now withdraws forever. Oh, dear sinner, remember, remember, that when the second death shall stretch its pall over thy condemned spirit, all these calls and opportunities of mercy thou wilt forever miss! In vain wilt thou look through the gathering gloom for some ray of light. The heavens which stretched above thine earthly pathway, were radiant with ten thousand starry hopes, but now every star has faded from the sky—and when at death the last one set—hope for thy soul went out forever.

I can see him as with a sad face he stated these solemn truths, and then his countenance brightening, with a beaming, winning smile, he said:

But, thanks be unto God, ye are not dead, but living. Still it is a time of hope; still unto you the messages of mercy are given, and Jesus stands with open and inviting arms. Will you not fly from sin and danger, and through Jesus secure the hopes which now hang suspended upon the brittle thread of time? Oh, decide wisely, decide *now*! For while death *seals* our opportunities, the Spirit sometimes leaves us *even before we die*, and we thus anticipate our doom before we hear its awful decisions thundering in our guilty ears. How fearful will be that trumpet blast as the scenes of the judgment close, and the wicked dead shall hear the angel cry, as they rise from impenitent graves, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." And the ages, as they roll their unending cycles through eternity, shall but echo God's approval of the verdict, "Filthy still, filthy still;" while the tormented spirit, ever conscious of its increasing and malignant hate of all things pure and

beautiful and true, will mutter with weeping and wailing its verdict and its doom, "Filthy still, filthy still!"

In the sermon from the text "I would not live away," after describing Job, his afflictions and his patience, he divides his subject thus, under the general theme, "Why is it that the Christian often exclaims—I would not live away?"

1. This is a life of sin.
2. This is a life of trouble.
3. This is a life of labor and toil.
4. Death has no terrors.
5. Finally, his reward is in the life to come.

We quote from under the two last heads, one of which, where he describes the death of the Christian, was prophetic of his own.

4. Death has no terrors.

To the natural heart, death is indeed the King of Terrors; among all the ranks of the ungodly, none can be found who dares to meet him. At his approach the lips of the boldest blasphemers turn white with fear; the stoutest knees will tremble, the stoutest heart will quail. All that appertains to death is regarded with instinctive dread—the death chamber, the shroud, the coffin, the mournful knell, all strike apprehension to the unconverted soul. *And it is not strange!* Who would not tremble as he sees the last coil of time running out that is to leave him amid a starless night, adrift, upon the trackless, shoreless ocean—Eternity! Who would not tremble as he is about to approach that great white throne, and sees already the lightnings of God's wrath, and hears ringing in his ears eternity's awful knell—depart! depart! Yes, yes, the impenitent sinner may

well tremble here! In the enjoyment of God's blessings, in life and in health, he could put on courage, and set all good influences at defiance; could smile at the entreaties of God's people and make their prayers a jest; and could resist with much apparent boldness God's pleading Spirit. But when death approaches, he cries aloud with alarm; he shrieks in terror; his affrighted and guilty spirit flutters like a bird in the hands of the fowler, and he dies *in fear*. But who is this that amid all the solemnity of life's last scene, when the dying hour is almost spent, when earth is receding from his view, and the realities of eternity are dimly reflected in his glassy eye; who is this that whispers, "Death has no terrors?" Who is this that grows calm, while others mourn and are troubled? Who is this that smiles, while others broken-hearted weep in an agony of grief? Need I say, it is the Christ-pardoned, Christ-supported one? To him death is a vanquished foe; dying is the last struggle which secures the crown; the cutting of the cord which binds his fluttering spirit, struggling to be free; the crossing of the Jordan to "that happy land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign;" and amid the overflowings of the cold waters, he shouts triumphantly, "I would not live away."

5. But finally, his reward is in the life to come.

Although the true and faithful Christian is abundantly repaid even in this life for all the sacrifices he is called upon to make, he is taught to expect hereafter the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The heaven of his hopes stands ever before the eye of his faith, as did Canaan in all its varied loveliness before the ravished eyes of Moses, as from the summits of Pisgah he wishfully looked forth.



We have spoken of this life as one of sin, but the Christian's life to come is one of perfect holiness. All the sinful propensities of our nature which here are the occasion of so much pain, will there be purged, and the motives and emotions of the soul will be of the purest and loftiest nature. The service of God, so imperfect on earth, will be exchanged for the purer and nobler employment of the redeemed in the presence of Jehovah; and all the inhabitants of that celestial empire will be engaged in them; their eyes will no more see sin, nor their hearts feel its anguish. Sin can never enter there, but perfect holiness shall reign forever and ever.

We have said that this life is one of trouble; the life beyond is to the Christian infinite in its enjoyments. All tears will there be wiped away, no trouble there—no partings—no bereavements—no bitter disappointments—no sad regrets. \* \* \* No jarring word will be heard in all their acclamations of praise; no discordant note in all their songs of joy. But noblest, richest, rarest pleasure of them all, *Christ Jesus will be there*, Christ the glorified, and Christ the triumphant. But will He then remember and love His earth-born people? When on His glorious and all-resplendent throne, when all the myriads of angels, the cherubim and the seraphim, the flaming spirits of His august court, the countless ranks and armies of the skies are about Him as a pavilion, will He then remember me? a poor sinner of earth, saved only by His extremest grace! O, yes, oh, yes! and as His eye of love shall fall on me, and as he hears my feeble cry—hushed will be the rustling of angelic wings, hushed their voice of praise, hushed every echoing harp, and Heaven shall be still. Then in His presence, at his feet,



will I, as a thousand times before, repeat my simple prayer,

Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Then when my Christ shall say, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," the listening host shall shout a glad "Amen," and Heaven shall be joyful in its praise of that grace which could save a wretch like me. Such a welcome, brethren beloved, awaits us all. How natural and how delightful to anticipate the crowning glory of that expected hour! We have spoken of the present as a life of toil; that upon which we hope to enter, is one of everlasting *rest*. Not of indolence or sloth, but of happy exemption from wearisome labor and exhausting toil. The powers of the soul will all be enlisted, but in that alone which will contribute to its highest development and its greatest felicity. He who from the heights of Heaven looks back upon earth will remember it as the place where his work was finished. When there, all was labor and toil, but when earth passed away, these labors ceased. The good seed had been sown; the harvests of redemption had been gathered, until the millennial splendors burst upon the astonished world, and angels shouted their "Harvest Home." But now the tired workman may rest within the garner of his Lord, and enjoy the full fruition of his earthly toil.

Is this then the Christian's prospect, the Christian's hope, the Christian's rich and sure reward? O, how can he but anticipate and long for it? And how delightful and tranquilizing must the influence of this expected heritage be upon his spirit while suffering the bondage

of time ! Oh, my brethren, let us not cling so eagerly to life ; let us not stand so in fear of death ; let us not hesitate at sacrifices, or shrink from the labors and duties of time, but take hold of and by faith enjoy all that is laid up in store for us through the abounding mercy and goodness of the Saviour ! Thus will our affections be weaned away from earth and placed on Heaven, and on Him whose presence, majesty, and love lend to Heaven all its charms !

To the satisfaction and indeed the delight of the church, Mr. Dickerson continued his preaching for them until the return of Dr. Cheney, who then playfully informed him that he considered there was little chance for himself, as his temporary substitute had entirely led captive the affections of the people. Mr. Dickerson, however, was not a man to encourage division ; the returned pastor readily resumed his place in the hearts of his people ; and Mr. Dickerson, cheerfully resigning his lieutenancy, found ample occasion for continuing his preaching in pulpits temporarily vacated through the sickness or absence of their habitual occupants.

Soon after this, in 1860, he received an invitation to supply the pulpit of the Second Baptist Church in Wilmington, Del., for six months. As Wilmington was but an hour's ride from Philadelphia, and as he had experienced no apparent ill effect in his throat and lungs during the several months of his recent preaching, he accepted the invitation. He preached for the church regularly, except when occasionally giving way to persons who came to preach as candidates, but with no thought of appearing as

a candidate himself. He found, indeed, to his surprise that, notwithstanding the expressed judgments of physicians that the state of his throat would never allow of his permanent public speaking, he yet did not suffer sensibly from the practice, but sometimes found himself rather better "for a good preach," and on the whole seemed to be gaining in health and vigor. Matters at length came to a decision. Toward the close of the year the Wilmington Church held a meeting to discuss the claims of candidates, but found none among those who had appeared before them whom they could unite in calling. At length the question arose whether it might not be possible to induce him who was now filling their pulpit temporarily to change his relation into that of permanent pastor, the opinion being expressed that they could unanimously vote for him, as he was universally loved, and his preaching was universally acceptable. The strongest doubts, however, were expressed as to the possibility of his being obtained, as it was well known that he had relinquished his purpose of preaching, and taken his present position, under very decided medical advice. The church adjourned its meeting therefore with little or no hope of securing him.

On the next day as Mr. Dickerson was on his way to Wilmington he fell in with one of the most influential members of the Wilmington Church, who informed him of the discussion of the night previous, and asked him if he would consent that his name should come before them for the pastorate. He replied that preaching was his delight beyond

any other work which he could engage in, yet he should hesitate to sell his paper, as in case of failure it might be difficult for him to re-establish himself in business.

“But,” replied his friend, “you have been preaching for us almost regularly for six months, and you yourself declare your health to be better than a year ago. What reason for supposing that if you exchange your work as editor for that of the pastorate, your health will be likely to suffer?”

“That is a new view,” said Mr. Dickerson, “and something for me to think about. It may be that God is opening the way to me for a life of preaching.”

He did think about it, and so did the church; or rather with no further thought about it than simply to find him not indisposed to listen, they gave him, Dec. 10th, 1860, a unanimous call, and he became their pastor. He accepted it in January, the acceptance to take effect March 1, 1861. He had the privilege of retaining for a year his newspaper, and spending three days of the week in Philadelphia. His income from the paper was \$1,600.00 in gold, and at the close of the year he relinquished this for a salary of \$1,000.00 in currency—not, from a wordly point of view, a very profitable exchange. But he sought—and we doubt not obtained—the “durable riches” of righteousness, the treasure in heaven that fadeth not away. The salary he received during this period, however, he paid over to

Rev. Dr. J. Newton Brown, who became associate editor of the paper. His arrangements being finally completed, he removed, in the Spring, with his family to Wilmington, and assumed the pastorate of the Second Baptist Church in that city.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### RESIDENCE IN WILMINGTON.

Mr. Dickerson had been but a short time in Wilmington before it became evident, both to himself and others, that Providence had ordered the steps which brought him thither, and was vindicating and stamping with its seal of approval, that crowning purpose of his life which had linked it with the ministry of the gospel. He speedily became the most popular preacher in the place; his Sabbath audiences increased constantly; the Sunday-school nearly doubled itself; and he was called on to speak on all Sunday-school anniversaries, and other occasions of public and religious interest.

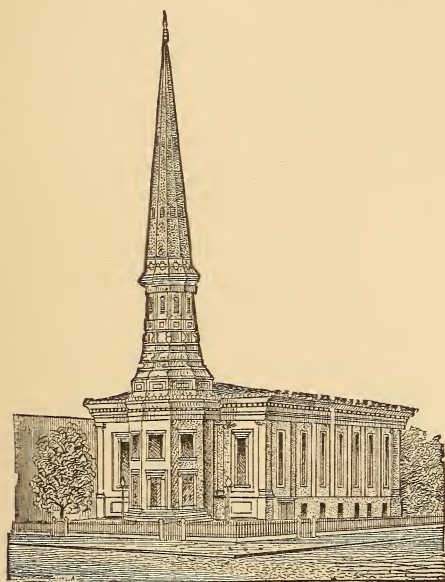
Mr. Dickerson had, however, other duties which, if, to the Christian minister, less ultimately and transcendently important, were of even more obvious and pressing public interest. To one who marked carefully the course and issues of events, it could scarcely be doubtful that the hand of God had guided him to Wilmington, not only to promote great spiritual, but also great public and patriotic interests. The country was in the agony of an opening civil war; the powerful gripe of a great armed rebellion was fastening itself upon her throat, and under the alleged right of secession the South-

ern States were rapidly banding themselves against the Union. Mr. Dickerson had scarcely been a month in Wilmington when the cannon fired upon Fort Sumter plunged the nation into the dire reality of civil war. Delaware was a slave State, and, although in the northern county of Newcastle there was a small Republican majority, and the population was less intensely Southern in feeling and sympathy than in the middle and southern counties, still Wilmington had many prominent citizens who were outspoken in their advocacy of State sovereignty and slavery. So pronounced was this feeling in the community that amidst the excitement consequent upon the fall of Sumter many loyal men were intimidated into silence by the open sympathy of influential and wealthy citizens with the rebellion. It was not so with Mr. Dickerson. Young in years and small in stature; gentle, genial and kindly in manner and disposition, he would have been judged by those who knew him superficially as likely to be conservative in temper, shrinking from the advocacy of unpopular views, and timid in resistance to the encroachments of wrong. No opinion could be more erroneous. His small body enshrined the spirit of a hero; his genial manners, that seemed gentle as a summer breeze, were united with a principle as sturdy as the oak that defies the tempest; and he speedily came to be recognized as among the boldest men in the State, unflinchingly sustaining the cause of the Union, advocating loyalty to the Government, and inspiring with its spirit his fellow-citizens. On Friday, April 12th, Fort Sumter was attacked, and on the

following Saturday such a wave of excitement swept over the land as had probably not been known since the days of the Revolution. On the afternoon of that day Mr. Dickerson went to his study with a heart fired with loyal zeal, and fully alive to the character and magnitude of the struggle that had commenced between freedom and slavery, loyalty and treason, government and anarchy. He laid aside the sermon which he had prepared for the coming Sabbath, and made full notes of a discourse on "The Duties of the Hour." In the evening he saw some of his members, who were loyal to the country, and informed them of the topic which he proposed to discuss on the morrow, and requested that the pulpit might be wreathed with the American flag. Some opposed the fulfilling of his purpose; others were favorable, but timid; while two or three were willing, at the hazard of whatever sacrifice, to stand by the Government.

It was quite a different matter in a city hovering on the very verge of secession, and with a large and powerful sentiment outspoken in its favor, to preach a sermon of this kind, from what it was to preach a like discourse in a Northern city. Even there the patriotic support which the pulpit rendered to the Government, the ready zeal with which the great body of the clergy lent their powerful influence to the cause of union and freedom, was by no means to be lightly esteemed. But the eloquence that found itself borne up, inflamed, and even anticipated, by the burning enthusiasm of an entire congregation, and of an almost unanimous community, had

a far easier task than that which, with the very billows of secession dashing angrily around it, was poured out upon a timid, half-hearted, divided congregation in which for a man to be an avowed and unshaken Unionist was to be consciously a hero, and



SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH,  
WILMINGTON, DEL.

possibly a martyr. Such were the elements that surrounded Mr. Dickerson, and amidst which he instantly, unflinchingly and unwaveringly took his stand for the cause in which he deemed were bound up the best interests of his country. A few, and but a few, rallied nobly to his support. Some of his members, knowing the excitement that prevailed in

the community, asked him if he would like to have an armed guard by him in the church. He declined the proposal, preferring to trust to God and the right for his protection. Some of the brethren, however, without his knowledge, arranged that an armed force should be present, both to shield him from attack, and the church from threatened injury. He had the theme of his sermon as widely advertised as possible, hoping that it might benefit many outside of his own congregation.

The Sabbath morning came, looked forward to by many with great trepidation. A large assembly gathered in his spacious church, and in the words of another, "with his pulpit decorated with the National banner, and underneath the stars and stripes, he met the great throng of his fellow-citizens; and to him belongs the honor of sounding out the first notes of loyalty to his country's flag heard in the city of Wilmington. His great popularity at the time, and his words of ringing eloquence were a mighty power for leading the public mind in the right direction." He stood up before the audience (among whom he recognized many of his violent opposers), and with his clear, musical, ringing voice read the hymn beginning :

Lord, while for all mankind we pray,  
Of every clime and coast,  
O hear us for our native land,  
The land we love the most.

After an earnest, fervent prayer for the country, especially in this dark hour, for the President and all in authority, for the people that they might stand



true and loyal, and cherish the heritage bought by the blood of their fathers, another stirring hymn was sung, and the preacher announced as his text Rom. xiii. 1.

The sermon met the exigency; it was thrillingly eloquent. A few, during its delivery, evinced their displeasure by leaving the house, the preacher pausing in recognition of their withdrawal; but no disturbance occurred, and at the close the great assembly rose, and in billowy chorus sang, as they had never before sung, the patriotic hymn:

My country 'tis of thee,  
Land of the noble, free,  
Of thee I sing.

We have enlarged a little on this scene as strikingly illustrating Mr. Dickerson's fearlessness in time of danger, and his fidelity to principle under the most trying circumstances, as well as because it initiated a series of loyal and valuable services rendered by him to the country during the dark times that followed. In Wilmington and its neighborhood, by unceasing patriotic and Christian activity; at Fort Delaware; at the front as an officer of the Christian Commission;—everywhere that his bodily or mental activity could make itself felt, he labored for the country and the Union until the war closed in the crushing of the rebellion. His service was recognized widely in the State, and in remoter quarters from which he dreamed of no such recognition. The Government learned to value a loyalty to the Union at once so staunch, so active, and so judicious; and President Lincoln paid him probably no more

than a well deserved compliment when he said, "That one, little, loyal, clear-headed Baptist minister of Wilmington, James S. Dickerson, saved Delaware to the Union." Undoubtedly the little State of Delaware, cast into the doubtful and trembling balances of loyalty and secession, could scarcely add a preponderant and decisive weight, to turn the scale, and determine the issues of the great struggle. The conflict was of too vast proportions for that: half a continent was echoing with the din and reeling under the terrific shock of war. Yet, even then it was no little thing — no small service rendered to the cause of right and truth, to hold one small State firm to its moorings that would otherwise have been swept off by the raging tide of secession. This, it is scarcely too much to say, Mr. Dickerson effected; and when it shall stand registered against his name that in this dark hour of his country's peril and agony "he did what he could," that *what he could* will be found to have earned him from all who rightly estimate noble deeds, a rich reward of gratitude and praise. We may add that Mr. Dickerson's course here in Delaware in this political crisis was but of a piece with his entire course of life as a Christian minister. He did not reserve either his zeal, his boldness, or his discretion, for a war of but temporal, even though national, interests. It was in the great battle between spiritual truth and error, between holiness and sin, between moral freedom and slavery, between the powers of eternal life and eternal death, that he had primarily enlisted, and that his supreme energies were called forth, and in

behalf of these great interests alike now and in all his later career, his devotion, his courage, and his prudence never failed. Rarely, very rarely, indeed, has there been so happily constituted a nature. The genial and frolicksome companion was a moral hero. His temper was buoyancy itself, his heart was affection, and his principles were adamant.

For months after the preaching of this sermon Mr. Dickerson labored strenuously to instill into the minds of the citizens loyal principles, by speeches at mass-meetings, by editorials in the Wilmington papers, and by other means which his earnest patriotism was fertile in suggesting. Thus, to his personal influence, his magnetism, and his eloquence, it was very largely owing that in the following year, in spite of the fiercest opposition, a Republican Governor was elected and inaugurated.

There was also one form of warlike experience of which those of us who lived far in the Northern interior can have little conception — this is the constant excitement of a people through whose city troops were almost daily passing on their way to the field of action, while in reflex movement, and in too nearly equal proportions, trains loaded with wounded men on their way back to Northern hospitals, stopped to secure for their suffering occupants rest and refreshment. Wilmington, lying nearly on the border land of the seat of war, was such a city. For months the bell of the City Hall rang out daily, and sometimes twice in the day, its well-known peal, summoning the people to gather at the depot with hot coffee, tea, and food for a train of wounded men ex-

pected shortly to arrive ; and from all quarters of the city of some twenty thousand inhabitants, loyal men, women, and children were seen coming with their baskets of food and cans of hot coffee, to comfort and refresh the weary travelers, often crowded together on the floors of cattle-cars, often mutilated, always suffering, but generally patient, cheerful, and heroic. Whatever happened to be cooked in the houses for family use was at once taken to these soldiers, and delegations of noble women came with cordials, bandages, and whatever was required for their solace and refreshment. It happened that on one Sabbath the Court House bell rang out just as the church bells were summoning the people to the house of prayer. The call of the former was of course imperative ; the church-goers, taking their nicely prepared Sunday dinners, turned their steps towards the depot, and works of necessity and mercy to the faint and suffering were undoubtedly accepted on high in place of the pealing anthem and the utterances of prayer and praise in the great congregation. Audiences in the house of worship that morning may have been "fit," but they certainly were "few." Mr. Dickerson preached to about twenty persons, closed the service shortly after eleven o'clock, and alike the pastor and his fragment of an audience, hastened to join the larger body of good Samaritans at the depot in offices of kindness to these sufferers who, by more than the ordinary tie, were their "neighbors."

During the four years, from 1861 to 1865, Mr.



Dickerson and his wife were constantly active in devising and carrying out plans to aid the soldiers. Mrs. Dickerson was the treasurer of a society of women who spent much time in preparing for them articles of clothing, and who in a union effort worked assiduously in preparing a table of useful and beautiful articles for a great Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia, in which Wilmington was most handsomely represented. Mr. Dickerson spent much time in visiting the hospitals in Wilmington, conversing with the soldiers, giving them religious counsel and reading, and ministering in various ways to their personal comfort. During one of those years he, with Gov. Cannon and several other officials, was appointed to escort President Lincoln in a special car from Wilmington to Philadelphia. He had much conversation with the President on the subject of the war, and the latter treated him alike with fraternal familiarity and as an honored guest, and publicly recognized the valuable service which he had rendered to the Government.

But while Mr. Dickerson's entire political sympathies were thus enlisted on behalf of the Government, and he was what might be called a radical Republican, as a Christian minister he knew no political or party lines. To all, of every shade of opinion, he was equally anxious to furnish the bread of life. Some thousands of rebel prisoners were confined in the neighboring Fort Delaware, and to these he desired to give spiritual comfort and instruction. He asked, therefore, from the military



commander in Wilmington the privilege of going to the Fort for this purpose, and received in response the following document :

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY COMMANDER,  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, July 22, 1863.

BRIGADIER GENERAL A. SCHOEPP,  
*Commanding Fort Delaware.*

GENERAL : The pious zeal of the Rev. James S. Dickerson has induced him to ask to be permitted to visit the Fort, and, with your sanction, offer to the rebel prisoners such ghostly comfort, loyal counsel, and religious reading as may best conduce to their temporal and spiritual welfare. He has been appointed by Col. McComb as chaplain to his regiment, but was never regularly mustered into service. He is the pastor of one of the Baptist churches of this city, and a gentleman in whom I have every confidence, and for whom I entertain sincere respect. Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY B. JUDD,

*Major U. S. Army and Military Commander.*

On Wednesday Mr. Dickerson received this permission to go to the Fort, and on Friday he went there, remaining until the following Tuesday. He talked with very many of the prisoners, gave them good counsel and good reading, and held one ever-to-be-remembered service on the Sabbath. There had been ten thousand prisoners there ; within a short period three thousand of the number had been exchanged, so that there were still seven thousand within the enclosure of the fort, and a sadder-looking, and more disconsolate

company could scarcely be imagined. On Sunday, the 26th of July, one of the most sultry days of the season, he proposed preaching to them all, but on account of the intense heat could not gather them together in the open court until near sunset. As they filed into the enclosure by hundreds until about seven thousand men wearing the gray uniform stood ready to hear the gospel from the lips of an anti-slavery, Republican, loyal minister, the commander of the Fort stepped up to Mr. Dickerson and asked him how much of a guard he would like about him as he went into the enclosure. He replied :

“I don’t want any guard at all.”

“You know where you are going, don’t you — among seven thousand rebels?”

“Yes,” he replied, “but I am not going there as a Northern man against Southerners, or as a loyal man against rebels, but as a Christian minister to preach the gospel of Christ. Just send in a big dry-goods box that I can stand on, so that they can see and hear me, and that is all I want.”

The box was carried in, and Mr. Dickerson climbed upon it. Before he began to preach he told the prisoners who he was, a minister from Wilmington, and a man loyal to the Union.

“But,” said he, “I have not come to talk to you as rebels, nor to discuss political questions, State rights, the Confederacy and the Government. But, as we are all rebels, both the blue coats and the gray ones, the Northerners and the Southerners, against the Lord of Hosts and His government, I have come to tell you how you can be reinstated in His favor,

become His willing subjects, and, enlisting in the army of King Jesus, whose armies are the only ones that are victorious over every foe, come off conquerors at last."

"And now," said he, "let us sing together one or two sweet hymns in which we can all join, which you have heard many a time in your Southern homes, and sung perhaps by your own happy firesides. I have chosen those which I think you will know, and now let everyone that can sing join with us in that grand old hymn 'Jesus, lover of my soul.'"

He commenced it, while the men, many of them with husky voices and tear-filled eyes joined with him, even to the remotest lines of the assembly. He then gave out another, "There is a fountain filled with blood," which they sang most heartily. He then preached to them a plain and practical sermon from the text "There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." His power of graphic description, and familiar and forcible illustration; his fervid earnestness united with a graceful and impressive elocution, sent the great truths which he uttered right home to the hearts of the hearers. The great audience listened thrilled and spell-bound to the close, and to the final appeal in which he pleaded with them to forsake the service of sin and enlist under the banner of the cross, thus bringing joy alike to the heavenly hosts, and to many dear ones far away, who might even then be praying at their bereaved hearths for those who were exiled at once from their earthly and their heavenly home. Many of the hearers

melted into tears, and when he asked that all those who loved the Savior and were enlisted in his service should raise their hands, hundreds were uplifted ; and when again he asked that all who would wish to begin a new life, and take Jesus as the Captain of their salvation, should raise the hand, through the whole immense throng a sea of upraised hands could be discerned amidst the gathering shadows. They then sang successively the hymns, "Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched," and "Children of the heavenly King," (the latter always a favorite,) after which he told them how glad he was of this opportunity of addressing them, thanked them for their quietness and attention, and, promising to visit them again, proposed that they unite in singing the hymn :

All hail the power of Jesus' name,  
Let angels prostrate fall ;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all ;

which they did, and from multitudes of lips and hearts that glorious Coronation hymn floated on the evening air over this vast assemblage of imprisoned exiles. Many hearts were drawn towards him in tender sympathy ; they gathered around him as he descended from his extemporized pulpit with streaming eyes and grateful words, and followed him (whom a little before it was deemed necessary to shield from their hostility with an armed guard) with loving looks as he passed from the enclosure to his apartments in the Fort. This was his first visit to them, but by no means his last ; although he did not again address here so large an audience.



In April of this year he was enrolled as chaplain of the Fifth Delaware Regiment. The next year (May 12, 1864) he was appointed by the U. S. Christian Commission to go to the front to care for the wounded soldiers; and he spent about two months in and near Fredericksburg. Some few of his notes it may be interesting to glance at, which he jotted down hastily in pencil, wherever it happened, in the hospital or in the field.

Mrs. Elizabeth H. Stuart, Jackson, Michigan. Husband wounded on the right side, below the shoulder, not very seriously — is getting along well. Will try to get a furlough. John H. Stuart.

George H. Sears. Write to Mrs. Cor. Sears, his mother. N. Adams, Mass. Wounded in left thigh — serious but not dangerous, on Thursday, the 12th — getting on pretty well — love to F. and M. — and little Ella and Charlie. Clings to his hope in the Savior.

Write to Pike Mills, Potter Co., Pa. Elliot Kilbourn, to his father, Jno. M. Kilbourn — wounded on the 12th, right leg off above the knee — getting on bravely — is in a store. Love to all, especially little Hattie. Won't be discharged till my time is up, three years from April. Don't be discouraged, father.

Samuel Steen, to his mother, Mrs. Ann Steen, New Castle P. O., Pa. Right leg off above the knee — looking brighter to-day — tell his mother and brother "don't fret about me" (tears rolling down his cheeks).

Asa Hamrick (rebel) to his wife, Mrs. R. C. Hamrick, Shelby, N. C. Was wounded in the left leg — off above the knee. Care of Gen. Winder, Richmond, Va. Is well treated and getting along.

Ira C. Kitch, to his wife, Martha J. Kitch, Anderson-



ville, Pa. In the right shoulder — serious, but not dangerous — getting along pretty well. Has four children — his hope is strong. He prays for you. I gave him Ada's Testament.

Buried to-day, H. W. Reider, 1st Reg. Me., died May 22, 1864. On Monday went to the battle ; on Tuesday in the hospital ; on Sunday dead.

S. J. Allen, 17th Vermont Reg't, May 22, 1864. Severely wounded in the leg. Alive at 11:35 A. M., buried at 5 P. M. His wife, Mrs. Mary Allen, Morrisville, Vt.

An Indian, from Ottawa. Simon Geshey, Co. K. 1st Mich. Sharpshooters, and Peter Buckshot, from the Seven Nations, 9th N. H.

Scene in Quartermaster Boyd's tent, when the mail came in with letters for several dead officers and men.

The Indian warrior. Severely wounded in the abdomen. I talked with him, and he said with clasped hands, "Yes, the Heavenly God" — and died.

"Rally round the Flag."—The poor fellow, under the influence of chloroform, after a little wavering, moaning and groaning, sang "Rally round the flag, boys," while the amputation was going on.

The 1st Maine, and also a Mass. company, in magnificent array on Monday, and on Tuesday broken, wounded, dying and dead in our hospitals.

Belle Plain. A man struck and wounded with a shell. He asked for a testament and gave his heart to God.

Temperance. The man whose back was ploughed with a shell from his shoulder to his hip — it was dressed without a murmur or a groan — not a drop of whisky would he take.

The singing up stairs in the hospital. Hearing the sweet strains led a man to the Savior in the room below.

The sick soldier in the Convent Hospital, Fredericksburg. Wounded — faint — perhaps dying. “Will you have something to drink?” “O no, sir, I can’t drink rum.”

These, no doubt, are similar to the notes of all the officers of the Christian Commission, but will give an idea of the work he was doing there, and show what a strain there must have been on his delicate body, and his sensitive and sympathetic nature. Shortly after his return to Wilmington the Phil., Wil. & Balt. Railroad was threatened, and on Sunday morning notices were sent to all the churches like the following, which Mr. D. received:

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY COMMANDER,  
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, July 10, 1864.

Citizens are earnestly requested to enroll their names and organize into companies of not less than eighty-two men for the defense of the Phil., Wil. & Balt. Railroad.

Companies will be accepted for thirty days or the emergency, and will be mustered as soon as the proper number of men is reported to this office. Immediate action is necessary.

HENRY B. JUDD,  
*Major U. S. Army and Military Commander.*

NOTE.—The City Hall bell will be rung for a meeting of citizens at the hall at 12½ o’clock to-day.

TO THE PASTOR,

2d Baptist Church, Wilmington, Del.

(Please read this at the close of the services.)

A letter written by his wife soon after to the editor of this memoir speaks of the general excitement, of

the ordering off of the Fifth Delaware Regiment on a Sunday, and the strange appearance of the city as they came from church; while the drums were beating, the fifes playing, soldiers marching, and everything utterly unlike a Sabbath day. She adds that Mr. Dickerson has overworked, has been holding two or three meetings a week at the hospitals, and doing so much in every way that he must have a long rest.

During these years there was no one who labored with Mr. Dickerson so constantly and so loyally as the Rev. Dr. Aikman, pastor of one of the Presbyterian churches in Wilmington. From Aurora, New York, Dr. Aikman sends me the following letter, which portrays the political condition of the State, and gives some account of the loyal work which was done by these two congenial spirits. In a note accompanying the letter Dr. Aikman writes: "I am painfully apprehensive that what I have been able to write in regard to Mr. Dickerson will not be satisfactory to you, even as it is not to me. My relations to, and affection for, your husband were of such a nature that what I prepare for the public eye necessarily appears very inadequate. I do not know how to help it."

AURORA, N. Y., July 5, 1878.

MY DEAR MRS. DICKERSON: It was in "the solemn and eventful days of the war" (so he impressively described them in his last letter to me), that I became acquainted with Dr. Dickerson. The peculiar circumstances in which we found ourselves, as well as our most perfect accord and sympathy on the

great questions which were then shaking the land and making the air tropical from love or hatred, ripened the acquaintance almost at once into an intimacy and friendship which was very precious to us both.

Delaware was a slave State and a border State. That single sentence has in it a volume of meaning to those who had their homes there when the rebellion came on. A great party had held the political power of the State for years; its whole sympathy was with the seceded States, and it would gladly have taken Delaware into the so-called Confederacy.

At first it was extremely doubtful whether Delaware could be kept in the Union. Everything was critical and uncertain. At the head of the street on which I resided, and just round the corner from Mr. Dickerson's home, rebels were under arms and drilling. Opposite my residence Union men were drilling, while a sentinel with loaded rifle was keeping guard. No one could say when a collision might occur. As we walked abroad, or looked in the faces of passers by, it was with a feeling of entire uncertainty whether or not the man we might meet was an enemy who would gladly have our life. The parties were so evenly balanced that it was impossible to say in advance which would be in the ascendancy.

In the all wise ordering of Divine Providence almost every pulpit in Wilmington, the largest and most influential city of the State, was filled by a Union man, and several by the most prominently Northern and anti-slavery men. So it was that as the first mutterings of the coming storm were heard, these pulpits began to speak, and when it burst, their tones were familiar for the right.

Among this band of patriotic men, who were fighting



a battle for the country with perhaps not less heroism than that which summoned others to the field, Mr. Dickerson took his place, and from the first hour of his coming stood in the front line of the combat.

In these memories, which come up with their oppressive sadness while I write, Mr. Dickerson and his heroic wife are blended. She not less than he holds her place in my admiring memory. She passed away from earth before the war closed, worn down by work and care at home and abroad, but her memory is green in the heart of many a soldier, or widowed soldier's wife, to whom she gave her very life. In the hospital, among the sick and wounded, she was an angel of mercy, and in all the ways in which a true woman can be a beneficent power she was eminent. Both in him and in her were seen frailty of body that yet bore up in untiring and unselfish labor to preserve the nation's life and minister to its defenders.

At this distance of time my recollections enable me to speak only in the most general way of my friend's work. Scenes and incidents, all full of quivering interest then, have grown dim and faded now. I recall our solitary walks in which we mingled our common hopes and fears and sympathies, our communings joyous and sad in each other's studies, our recreations, when, on our skates and with our children, we sought to throw off for a little while the weary cares that oppressed us as the war went on.

Mr. Dickerson was active and energetic in every labor that the exigencies of the time demanded. I find his name on calls for public meetings in the church in which I was pastor, and his voice there and everywhere gave no uncertain sound, while his facile pen was ready with words of hope or warning.



The times were not the easy-going times of peace. There, within almost the sound of the battle-field, everything took the cast of the excitement which was abroad. We lay down at night with the probability that before the dawn rebel cavalry would be in our streets, for we knew that the powder mills three miles away would naturally draw the attention of the enemy. The lines between man and man were sharply drawn, old friendships were cast aside and companionships abandoned as men took either side, for or against the government. So, while those who stood for it were drawn by peculiar ties more closely, those who hated it were ranged against them in a hostility that needed only an opportunity to culminate in violence and death. It was not strange that such a man as Dr. Dickerson should be cordially hated by the enemies of the country, and he took willingly and joyfully the enmity which was sure to follow patriotism as outspoken and energetic as his.

Devoted husband and father as he was, and with much to occupy both head and heart and hands at home, he was ready with help for the sick and wounded at his door and ready to go abroad also for this work. I remember him as we met in the streets of Fredericksburg, he in the service of the Christian, I in that of the Sanitary, Commission, and I knew that with his ready hand and glowing heart he was shunning no labor in that scene of suffering.

I have before me now an editorial from one of the papers of Wilmington, giving then, as they are now, my heartfelt convictions regarding the man and his work in Wilmington :

“In the community Mr. Dickerson has made for himself an abiding impression. With others, here before him, he has been from the first intensely

loyal, never fearing to speak or act when anything could be said or done to aid the cause of the country. He has given no doubtful utterances in relation to slavery or the rights of the black man. On all public occasions he has identified himself with those who were foremost in patriotic efforts to crush the rebellion, not hesitating to throw the whole weight of his influence, and in every way, against treason open or covert. It must be a satisfaction that he goes away" (the article was written just as Mr. Dickerson was leaving Wilmington) "at a time when the labors of these years of anxieties are crowned with such glorious success.

"Having endeared himself to a very large circle of friends outside his congregation, he bears with him their fervent wishes for his prosperity and success, and leaves behind him only pleasant recollections of a genial, open-hearted, earnest, and able man."—*Delaware Republican*, May 8, 1865.

And what I wrote for the public is a very cold and formal expression of the abiding admiration and affection with which my friend was enshrined in my heart. I shall hold him forever in memory as he was, in the bright joyousness of his spirit, the high nobility of his soul, when we walked and worked together, and rejoiced in homes and companionships which were like the joys and environments of heaven.

In a letter received from one of the members of the church in Wilmington, the writer says: "All my recollections of Dr. Dickerson, as pastor, brother, and friend, are pleasant; and none more so among the memories of those on earth, or of those that with him have gone to the joys of a better world.

I look back upon the five years that he was our pastor as the best years of my life; when I did more efficient service for the Master, under the guidance of Dr. Dickerson, than ever before or since. \* \* \* Our church had been retrograding for two years, both spiritually and financially, when he came to Wilmington; but from that time everything moved on more hopefully in all respects. The congregation and Sunday school increased in numbers, and we had one great revival while he was with us. During the five years over three hundred persons united with the church by baptism. The first year he was with us the pew-rents increased nearly a thousand dollars, the church was united and harmonious, and Dr. Dickerson was looked upon as a leader in every good thing. \* \* \* I have seen him under many different circumstances, and he always had the love and respect of those by whom he was surrounded. He was sought for to speak to all the Sunday schools in the city, and wherever he went he received a most hearty welcome. Everywhere he was a friend and a true helper. What he did for the country can hardly be realized, except to those who lived here, and knew the value of his services.

“Was there a victory for our army? we were sure of loyal inspiring words from one who was in sympathy with it. When there was a defeat, and some one was looked for to discover a bright side and cheer us, Dr. Dickerson was always the one called for. At the bedside of the sick, or in the house of mourning, he ever brought words of cheer

and comfort ! As chaplain of the Fifth Del. Reg't., of which I was a member, he was a most faithful man in his place ; was with us at Fort Delaware, while guarding the prisoners, and every one felt they had in him a true friend. Several of our number died from exposure ; one a young man whose parents were members of the Society of Friends. Although it was never their custom to have anyone speak at the funeral service, Dr. Dickerson was asked to attend, and was told that if he felt inclined to say anything there would be no objection to it whatever. Such an innovation made quite a stir ; but was most acceptable to all.

“ One incident during his pastorate here will ever be remembered by those who witnessed it. It was the giving of the hand of fellowship one Sabbath morning, to more than a hundred recent converts. They were ranged all around the church, and I thought, ‘ Surely the pastor can not have a word for each one this time.’ (He was always so happy in his reception of members ; having a most appropriate word for each.) But he stood on the platform and they moved slowly by, while he took the hand of each, and said something which was adapted to each case. It was a wonderfully tender scene. \* \* \* Some of his sermons we shall never forget. He had unusual talents for a public speaker, and was so true and devoted a Christian that his sermons had a powerful influence ; and in the prayer-meetings I have never seen his equal.”

From a letter received from another member of the same church, who did much active service for



the country in hospitals at the front during the war, we quote a few paragraphs. She speaks of his work for the church in the same general way as in the letter above quoted, and then says:—"Dr. Dickerson was earnest and active in the temperance cause; often lecturing on this subject to large and appreciative audiences, over whom his eloquence had wonderful power. He was also an Anti-Slavery man; always ready to plead the cause of the poor and oppressed. When Fort Sumter was attacked it was feared that Delaware would secede with the other Slave States; for our senators were secessionists, and tried to have our legislature unite with the South; but most of the ministers of every denomination were faithful to their country, and I have no doubt that their earnest pleadings and labors saved our State from rebellion. Among these none were more loyal, no one so brave as the pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Wilmington, Delaware. He was true and firm to the end; regardless of friend or foe. And it was not all talk with him—he acted his sentiments. He went down to the front, during that most horrible of battles, the 'Battle of the Wilderness,' and worked as few men did. I met him at Fredericksburg. He was among the faithful. And he was not one to offer merely spiritual consolation, where there was so much bodily suffering. He helped to prepare nourishment for the sick and wounded, to dress their wounds, and to minister to their comfort in many ways. I recall to-day how untiringly he would stir in the farina to the large kettles as I poured it in, pound



after pound. Although not strong, nor able to endure hardships, there were few men that worked so hard as he did, and none harder. \* \* \* He left Wilmington the year the war ended, with the regret and sorrow of hundreds besides those in his large church and congregation."

## CHAPTER IX.

### LAST YEAR IN WILMINGTON.

Mr. Dickerson's pastorate in Wilmington continued five years—years of faithful and almost unceasing toil, alike for his country and for the church. That his intense patriotism had not swallowed up his piety, or diminished his spiritual fervor, there are abundant attestations. During the last year of his pastorate, especially, there was a very powerful revival in his church, prepared for by his faithful labors, but occurring largely in connection with the co-operation of Rev. Jacob Knapp, who aided him during six or eight weeks of the Winter of 1864-5. The number of converts was very large, and over two hundred persons, I think, were added as members to Mr. Dickerson's church, while several other churches received considerable additions as the fruit of this revival. During Mr. Dickerson's entire ministry here, the accessions to his church were over three hundred.

Regarding this last work, Elder Knapp repeatedly declared, that he had never labored more happily, nor received from any pastor more cordial and sympathetic co-operation than from Mr. Dickerson. It will be remembered that Mr. Dickerson received his first decided impulses to a Christian life under

the preaching of this distinguished evangelist, and it was most natural that his heart should ever turn toward him with interest and affection. The last letter which Mr. Knapp ever wrote was written to Mr. Dickerson, in reply to one of sympathy from him, after hearing of his severe illness. We give this letter, in the belief that it will be of interest to many of our readers.

ROCKFORD, Feb. 25, 1874.

MY DEAR BROTHER DICKERSON: How delighted I should be to be associated with you in another glorious revival; but that I never expect until we pass over Jordan, and then there will be no fatigue, no souls to convert, no backsliders to reclaim, but an eternal day, when we shall reap the fruits of our labors here.

I think I am standing on the shore, and often exclaim: "O, come, ye white-winged angels, and convey me away to my eternal home." I should be happy to write you a good, long paternal letter, but I am not able. I can only write a few minutes at a time. My lungs, throat, and head are inflamed, and all I have been able to do has yet failed to remove the difficulty. Last Summer I almost recovered, and preached several Sabbaths with ease to myself and comfort to others. But I then took a sudden cold which has brought me down worse than ever. I am pained exceedingly for breath, and can do nothing at all. It is with difficulty that I can ask a blessing at the table. Still my doctor thinks if I can get along until warm weather I may be restored again to health. I will remember you, and your family and church in my feeble prayers, and beg yours for me and mine. The religious papers have been as silent as death about my condition. I have been excluded from

the house of God most of the time for two years, balancing between life and death, and yet scarcely an allusion has been made to it: no prayers requested for me. One or two Boston papers have given me a kind remembrance and some political papers. O, how worthless and unstable is the applause of men! When we are leading on God's sacramental host from victory to victory, shaking cities, convulsing continents, and scarcely in need of sympathy, we are exalted to Heaven; but when worn out with hundreds of successful campaigns, standing on the verge of eternity, in great pain and solicitude, we are passed by as a worthless thing. I thank God for the great change which He has brought about in my day, no matter whether by me or somebody else. He has done all the work, and to Him be all the glory. I feel as I am nearing the eternal world, that God is all and in all, and I am nothing. I see more to regret in my past history than ever before, and nothing in which to glory save the cross of Christ. Give my love to your dear wife and children, and to all the brethren and sisters in Boston. I am tired out and must bid you good by.

JACOB KNAPP.

P. S. All my family remember you with affection.

This letter—the last of Mr. Knapp's letters—was written a day or two before his death. His daughter accompanied it with one describing her father's peaceful death, and stating how much comfort he had received from Mr. Dickerson's kind words of remembrance. Such acts were characteristic of him. Alike to the near and the distant who were in suffering, he was constantly giving tokens of his unforgetting sympathy.

The time was now rapidly drawing near that was

to close Mr. Dickerson's labors with the church in Wilmington. He had received, in February, 1865, just before the coming of Elder Knapp to Wilmington, an invitation to preach for the First Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He accepted the invitation, and his sermons were so well received that, in a short time, he received from this large, important, wealthy, and flourishing church a unanimous call to become their pastor. During the revival which followed the coming of Elder Knapp, his acceptance of it was necessarily delayed. He was, however, seriously contemplating its acceptance, and in March he wrote to one of the members in Pittsburgh with whom he had had some correspondence, a letter, from which the following extracts will show at once his own state of mind, and the condition of his flock in Wilmington.

I little thought when I left you a few weeks ago that before the first of April, I should have the precious privilege of baptising over a hundred persons into the fellowship of my church. Every day has brought its labors, its anxieties, and its triumphs; and as it has been at times impossible to *drive* either the people of God, or rejoicing converts, or pleading, broken-hearted sinners away from the place of prayer, our meetings have continued very late, and it has sometimes been twelve o'clock before I could lay my poor, worn-out body down to sleep. Elder Knapp has, however, done all the preaching; while the exhortation, singing, talking, etc., etc., has been fully enough to wear upon my strength.

From this you see that with services every day and evening, and other duties outside, I have been able only



to think, pray, and almost weep, with regard to Pittsburgh. Headed by Elder Knapp the friends here are unanimous that I ought not to think of going, that I absolutely *can't* go! Salary shall be made up to \$2,000, and new support and sympathy are proffered, while the outside community threaten to turn a spring freshet into Pittsburgh for daring to call the Baptist *dominie* away from Delaware. In fact, my dear brother, it would have been a great relief to me if you or brother R. could have happened in to consult with me, and give Pittsburgh a fair chance. Some of my members saw in the *National Baptist* of last week that I had received the call, and on Sunday I told them from the pulpit that I was considering the question, and asked them to pray that we might all be rightly directed. Were convenience or even the question of salary to turn the case, \$2,000 here would be much better than the same amount at Pittsburgh; but I want to settle the case on other and far higher considerations, and I am willing to trust all my pecuniary affairs with my friends in either church.

\* \* \* I find my mind leaning toward Pittsburgh, but I have not as yet gained the consent of my judgment to say "yes" to your call. I am getting myself in readiness to go, provided that should seem to be the will of God. \* \* \* I am rejoiced that you have "put your hands to the plow," and sealed the bargain for the church lots. May God's blessing attend you at every step. Put your laborers right to work, and get under weigh *at once*. Every day lost is one day longer to wait for the happy hour when you can present your new edifice as an offering to God, and as an altar where sorrowing souls may taste His grace! Oh, may your new edifice be filled with the glory of God, and become the very "gate of Heaven" to many wandering ones!

I am a little at a loss as to going to the anniversaries at St. Louis in May. I am a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of the Missionary Union, and ought to be there, but really I do not see how I can go, as I am now fixed. Give my kindest regards to all your friends, and especially to your good wife and family. May God's blessings abide with you, and may salvation come to your house, my dear brother, and may all your family be of the household of faith.

Affectionately yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

A few weeks after this he came to the decision that it was his duty to accept the call to the Pittsburgh church, and he wrote accordingly the following letter :

WILMINGTON, April 12, 1865.

MESSRS. EVERSON, STRICKLER, and STEPHENSON,

*Committee of First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

DEAR BRETHREN: After careful and prayerful consideration of all the circumstances involved in your invitation to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, I have arrived at the conclusion that it is my duty to accept your call. You will therefore convey to the church my acceptance, and urge them to renewed prayer that the Great Head of the Church may set the seal of His approval upon their choice, and upon my decision.

While I leave behind me a united, prosperous, and affectionate church, I go to my new field of labor with large hopes for the Divine presence and blessing, and with great confidence that I shall receive the sympathies and hearty co-operation of all the members of my new church.

O, that coming years of happy, prosperous, vigorous growth on the part of your dear church, and larger measures of usefulness in the work of God by both pastor and people may attest the true wisdom of what is now consummated! That grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit may abide with you all forever, is the earnest and sincere prayer of your

Affectionate friend and brother in Christ,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

Mr. Dickerson did not leave Wilmington until after the first Sabbath in May, and was permitted to receive into the church on that Sabbath, multitudes of happy believers. Among the number then baptised and received was his wife, who had hitherto remained in the Episcopal communion, although for some time a Baptist in belief, and attending regularly with her husband the ordinary services of the church. With her, too, he baptised his eldest son, then twelve years of age, and his daughter Ada, whom, as for many years the afflicted lamb of his household flock, he saw with peculiar pleasure gathered into the fold of the Heavenly Shepherd. On that Sabbath they all sat down together—along with the large congregation of believers—for the first time; and no earthly eye could foresee, and no earthly heart could divine, that it was for the last. He could not know and did not dream that she, who had been for so many years the light of his home, and the joy of his heart, and whom he had just now welcomed into a more perfect Christian union, would, on the morning of another Sabbath, be lying on her

dying bed ; and that, on the day after, he would be gathering his motherless children — too young fully to appreciate their loss — about her grave. And if he *had* known it, though it would have lent to the present festive scene an indescribable pathos, yet faith would have looked through the agony of the parting, and the darkness of the tomb, to the triumphant awakening, the glad reunion, and the eternal life beyond. Thus bright is the heavenly hope that irradiates the dark river of life, and the scarcely darker river of death, towards which is its sure and steady course.

But now the messenger of fate, though near, was unseen and unsuspected, and nothing clouded the gladness of the occasion but the general sorrow over the loss of the pastor, whom all so thoroughly esteemed, and so warmly loved. Mr. Dickerson was not the man to be five years in any community without binding many hearts to him with the strongest ties of affection. A character naturally loveable had been touched into higher beauty by grace, so that esteem, based on the most thorough confidence in his moral integrity, was blended with the attachment which his winning ways uniformly inspired. The church was crowded to overflowing to hear his farewell sermon, and witness the reception of the large number of converts. In the afternoon a large assembly gathered again at the Sunday school anniversary, where beautiful presents were given, both to the Pastor and his wife, as tokens of the love alike of teachers and pupils. Mrs. Dickerson had for a long time taken charge of the infant class, and,



being a good musician, had assisted greatly in the church music, both vocal and instrumental. She was a woman of much natural humor, generally of great vivacity of spirits, and was universally loved, both by young and old. Having for some time been a Baptist in her general convictions, and satisfied that she could aid her husband more effectually by a closer union in the church, she determined to take the step before her husband entered his new field of labor. That anticipated field of labor she did not live to see.

In regard to the Sabbath school celebration, we make from the *Delaware Journal and Statesman*, May 12th, the following extracts:

Washington Jones, Esq., read his report, which showed that the school had made large accessions to its number during the year, and that many of the pupils have professed religion and connected themselves with the church. Then follows a full report, after which the superintendent addressed the pastor in these words:

“MY DEAR BROTHER AND PASTOR: I should be doing injustice to myself, as the superintendent of the school and an officer of the church, if I should allow the present opportunity to pass without an expression of our feelings towards you. We renewedly tender to you our warmest affection and sympathy, and our assurance of entire confidence in you as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have ever faithfully and earnestly declared the truths of the blessed Gospel, without the favor or fear of man, and have not failed to preach against sin in high places as well as low, nor to denounce treason and slavery, as well as other vices. We rejoice in God to-day that that noble flag, draped on this altar,



has never been dishonored in this pulpit, but has been defended with a veneration as strong as the love of life itself. \* \* \* You came to us, my brother, about five years ago with fear and trembling, lest your health might not bear you out in the discharge of your onerous duties; but God has abundantly blessed you, and set the seal of his approval on your labors, by permitting you to receive into the church about three hundred members during your pastorate. My brother, we shall miss you from this pulpit where we have so often listened to you with profit and pleasure; we shall miss you at the desk below, where we so often gathered at the lecture and for social prayer and conference; and in the Sabbath schools, O, how much we shall miss your pleasant countenance, your words of hope and encouragement to the teachers, your entertaining and instructive addresses to the children, and your aid to the superintendent. And last, but not least, we shall miss your social visits to our families, which were always of the most pleasant character. In conclusion allow me to say that the prayers of the church will ascend to the throne of Grace, invoking the richest of God's blessings upon you and your dear family, and praying that He may make you even more happy and useful in your new field of labor, than you have been in the one you are leaving."

The Rev. Mr. Aikman then followed with some remarks, referring in pleasing terms to the labors of Rev. Mr. Dickerson, both as a minister of the gospel and a citizen, and expressed great regret at the loss the community will sustain in his removal from our city.

At the conclusion of the exercises the teachers and scholars thronged around the Rev. Mr. Dickerson to take leave of him, and the tears which gushed from

many an eye, testified the deep hold he has upon the affections of those to whom he has ministered in spiritual things, during the past five years. He has labored in the cause of Christianity and education with a zeal worthy of the cause. The soldier has ever found in him a constant and steadfast friend, and whether in the camp or hospital, or far away on the field of strife, he was ever ready to lend a helping hand to mitigate his sorrows or relieve his wants. To his agency our brave volunteers are indebted for many comforts which served to render them happy even amidst the toils and the cares of the tented field. May his future life be attended with prosperity and happiness, and in the new field of his labors, may he meet with abundant reward.

From the *Delaware Republican* of May 11th, which gave an account of the farewell to the church, we quote a few lines :

In the morning the house was filled to excess, and Mr. D. in concluding his sermon referred to the troubles of earth, the parting with dear friends, and remarked that these things should make us all think of the happy meetings in Heaven. "There is not in my heart or mind a single feeling of dislike toward anyone, and there is not one upon whose head I do not sincerely invoke the blessing of God."

On the Wednesday following these farewell services, they started for Philadelphia, purposing to spend a single day and night with their friends, Rev. Mr. and Mrs. J. Hyatt Smith, and then immediately resume their journey to Pittsburgh. Providence ordered it otherwise. Their proposed stay of a day and a night was lengthened into one of several days

and nights, and when it was over, Mrs. Dickerson had left her husband for her heavenly home, and he, leaving his children behind him in Philadelphia, set out, bereaved and lonely, for his new destination. The blow, unlooked-for as it was, could be traced back to some obvious causes. Mrs. Dickerson, a few weeks before their proposed removal, had had a number of teeth extracted; from the use of ether at that time she had been made ill for several weeks, and when sufficiently recovered to be about, she naturally overworked in her preparations for the coming journey. Though sensible of overworking, yet she had uniformly enjoyed so good health, that she had no apprehension of serious consequences from a few days of unwonted fatigue and care. When the strain and excitement were over, however, she again became somewhat ill; yet she refused to yield to disease, and made herself a cheerful and agreeable inmate of the family of one of their deacons. On arriving at Philadelphia, her malady returned in an aggravated form; and, on the Monday following the Wednesday on which they arrived, it ended in her death. The following letter, written in June, 1865, to the editor of this memoir, gives an account of these last sad days.

MY DEAR FRIEND: How much your words of loving sympathy tended to comfort and console me, you can hardly imagine. 'Tis passing strange and yet terribly true, that the very ones whose love and sympathy in hours of sorrow make us the most conscious of our losses, are the very ones to whom we imploringly look for consolation. I find myself groping around, not so

much to find and to test my friends, as to gain access to the loving hearts that knew and prized my dear, departed Julia. To have loved her so as to miss her now, so as to have valued all the treasure of her noble qualities of heart and mind, and all the wealth of her pure, joyous, and unchanging love—this appreciation which makes them to feel that my grief *is* inconsolable—*this* consoles me. That nothing can or ought to comfort me—*this* is the sweetest comfort that I get, save that which is found gushing in its mysterious depths and solitude from the heart of Julia's Saviour and mine; who knew her, loved her, saved her for Himself and me, and loves us both so much, that infinitely to bless her and me, He took her to Himself and Heaven. Though I am very desolate and lonely, I am sweetly sustained of God. Every hour of the day and every watch of the night brings its thoughts of the happy tender past; every box I have unpacked, every book she owned or loved, every song she sung—her wedding slippers and her bridal dress, still fresh and unfaded, while my darling that wore them is far away;—her body cold, silent, dead, amid the shadows of Laurel Hill; her spirit making the atmosphere of Heaven brighter and happier by her redeemed smile and voice;—all this constitutes the trial of my situation. What must the joys of the heavenly inheritance be, when in the contrast, such tremendous sorrows and griefs as these are pronounced but “light” afflictions! If by such sad formulas God teaches the soul the depth and power of earthly friendship, O, what shall be the sway of that pure and powerful passion of the soul, *the love of Heaven*, towards its angels, its recognized friends of earth, and towards the infinite, and glorious, and loving God, our Saviour!

Here then indeed, my dear sister in Jesus, we can rest satisfied until

Faith is changed to glad fruition,  
Hope to sight, and prayer to praise.

Heaven certainly seems nearer, more blessed and real than ever before; and no doubt rich blessings to myself and others will grow out of this deep and apparently unmixed calamity.

On the Wednesday after the first Sabbath in May, we all left Wilmington at 4 P.M. In the morning Julia seemed as well (save a slight complaint of loss of appetite and an inward pain, which neither of us thought worthy of any special notice), and as cheerful and happy as could be. But just as she reached the depot, she seemed to be sinking into lassitude and weakness, and, as the cars started, a nervous chill came upon her, which however soon abated, and when we reached Hyatt Smith's we had the fullest hope that an hour or a night of rest would restore her fully. But pains, like those of severe rheumatism, inward, and through her limbs, racked her all Thursday; but the evening found her better. Friday the pains left her limbs, and fell like lightning on her brain. Saturday she became unconscious, and so remained until Monday night at 11:30, when she sweetly fell on sleep. By the side of my dear mother and father, in a bed of spring flowers in Laurel Hill, we laid her away on the following Thursday. Never was there more genuine heartfelt grief than was manifested over her coffin and grave. Friends from Wilmington, New York, and Philadelphia gathered around, and admired her even in death—for she looked like an angel dreaming, among beautiful flowers, of going home. Spencer and I came hither



soon after. My new church welcomed me with that true delicacy of tenderness which sings,

The heart feels most when the lips move not.

They have said little, but manifested a great deal. The three younger children came later in company with a sort of maiden aunt (a sister of my brother-in-law's brother's first wife—do you get the close relationship?). "Aunt Jane" is a lovely Christian woman; a sweet character indeed; gentle, kind, and judicious, and with age which has brought her much experience. How long I can command her services I hardly dare inquire. She comes to help me through. I have thus given you all the particulars of the trying scenes through which I have passed. They form a strange contrast with the joyousness which has reigned in my family circle, when you have been one of our number. Let this appeal to your sympathies stir you to remember us all in your prayers, and from your happier standpoint reflect some light, and joy, and comfort on us.

Your friend and brother,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

From the *Delaware Republican* of May 22, 1865, we quote the following article on the death of Mrs. Dickerson:

DEATH OF MRS. DICKERSON.—The funeral services of Mrs. Dickerson, wife of Rev. J. S. Dickerson, late of this city, were held in the Eleventh Baptist Church of Philadelphia, on Thursday morning. A large number of persons from Wilmington were present, to show their respect to the memory of the deceased, and their sympathy with the bereaved husband—among them Rev. Mr. Wiswall and Rev. Mr. Aikman. Addresses

were made by the Rev. Mr. Aikman of this city, and Rev. Messrs. Jeffrey and J. Hyatt Smith of Philadelphia. The interment was made in the Laurel Hill cemetery.

It is rarely our duty to record a more melancholy bereavement than that which is made in the above announcement. After a highly successful ministry in this city, Mr. Dickerson was removing to Pittsburgh, but on the day of his leaving, his wife was taken ill, and was conveyed to the house of an intimate friend, where, after a rapid and uninterrupted sinking, she died last Monday, having been for the most of the time entirely unconscious. Before she herself or her friends were aware of the fatal nature of the attack, she was beyond the reach of relief. We can but inadequately express our deep sympathy with our stricken friend, or our high appreciation of the character of his devoted wife. It does not become us to speak of the lovely traits which made her home radiant, and the scene of untiring and self-sacrificing devotion—that belongs to the inner circle of those who knew the beneficence of her daily life.

Mrs. Dickerson has been, during her residence here, always among the foremost in every good work in this city, especially in everything which concerned the welfare of our soldiers. As the efficient treasurer of the Ladies Aid Society, and always active in its work, she will not be soon forgotten. With engrossing family cares, and much wearing anxiety, she found time, if not strength, to labor beside the most earnest workers, and in a spirit of entire self-forgetfulness. Indeed these public cares, together with the toil that came upon her as a pastor's wife, we have reason to believe were not among the least of the causes, which brought her life to so sudden a termination. In the church and in the

Sunday school she was a very able helper of her husband, and his late people owe a debt of gratitude to her memory. A woman of rare energy, of devoted piety, and cultivated mind, diffusing blessings wherever she moved, she will long be remembered by this community where her last days were spent.

Other papers in Wilmington gave similar accounts of her death, and her characteristics.

We bring to a close our account of Mr. Dickerson's residence in Wilmington, by extracts from two or three of his letters to Rev. Dr. Aikman. The first was written soon after he became pastor in Pittsburgh, in July, 1865.

Wilmington sometimes seems to have drifted away, as though separated by long periods of time, long leagues of distance; and your family seem to me to dwell under its fair skies, touched by its sunlight, and fanned by its fragrant air. And then I, for a moment, and *my* family, my dear Julia, seem with you as close neighbors; both of us interested in all that pertains to each other's usefulness and happiness. Our almost boyish glee in walking, talking, and skating with each other, has a merry, joyous laugh to it, like the shout of innocent children at play. These memories, *even* these, so mingled with imperfections, and so transient in their stay,—even these have features which should, I think, remind us of Heaven, where all that is truly noble and good in our present *social* joys will be preserved; all that is ill will be purged away, while that which is partial and transient will be lifted to the infinite and eternal. Then, too, how our capacities for enjoyment will be intensified and expanded, while we shall have none for sorrow or for sin! Heaven is bound to be a happy,

happy place. Thank the Lord that each of us are stockholders, and that we have already accrued interest due us there! We are all as well as usual. I am sometimes very sad, but my cheerfulness is rallying, and my large hope seeing things brighter, and faith *knowing* what sight as yet can not clearly discern. God is daily showing me His goodness. Paxson, they tell me, has resigned — now if there is any stone that can be turned to get you here, let me know it. I'm your boy. I'm in. What are you going to do this Summer? I propose to go off for a while ; but don't know where, yet. \* \* \* May God preserve you and your children from afflictions which He has found necessary to place upon me. God bless you all. I see good brother Alrick and Mr. Dupont have gone. So, soon *we* shall pass away!

Affectionately Yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

Another was written during his vacation, when he had been expecting Dr. Aikman to join him at a Summer resort. He writes :

I was right glad to hear from you, but disappointed in not seeing you. I *did* want you to come; but that dear, sweet wife of yours has the first claim. May you have a happy and health-imparting vacation! This is a beautiful place, but I am lonely without some dear friend to commune with! (Then he speaks of the children, where and how they are, and adds:) They are all much saddened by their mother's death; but take singularly clear and Christian views of their bereavement, and talk of their mamma with upturned faces and quiet voices, as if they thought her near enough to be pained by any of our murmurings or complaints. Ada seems joyful in the thought that, more than likely, *she* will get the first

reunion kiss from the lips of the angel mother. As for myself, I am getting on slowly. Lack of sleep and a dreadful loneliness are my most inveterate enemies. I sleep good naps, if I take them in the day; but the moment I go to bed at night — no matter how sleepy — the moment I get *fixed* for sound sleep, I am as wide-awake, as full of thought, of mental activity, as I vainly wish to be in the daytime. Orations, sermons, stump speeches, repartee, are turned off with amazing facility. Then my church, my lost darling, my little motherless children, all come in turn; my head throbs, my heart beats so as to be heard, and I turn over and over; get up: try to change the current of my thought, and then going to bed again repeat the same service until two or three o'clock in the morning. \* \* \* Yesterday I went *fishing*, and came back with a fisherman's abundant rewards in everything save *fish*. That we narrowly escaped. We burnt our faces, blistered our hands, tired our arms and backs, to say nothing of getting our *fundamenta honoris* quite sore on the hard seat of the row-boat. But we had a "gay" time. I getting off magnificent puns, jokes, etc., which some of the company, though college boys, didn't see; they on the other hand were so *obviously* witty, that a man would be a fool to laugh at their attempts — *they* laughed. \* \* \* How I wanted somebody all day long to help me think, talk, see! I believe you were the very chap. But good-bye, old boy, until we meet again. May the favor of Heaven brighten over yours and you until at length its finished joys and glories shall emparadise us — *all* of yours, and *all* of mine, and the people of God everywhere and forever.

Affectionately, your brother and friend,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.



## CHAPTER X.

### A DOMESTIC INTERLUDE.

Our previous narrative has reached the point of Mr. Dickerson's departure from Wilmington, with the sudden illness and death of his wife in Philadelphia, when he had started for Pittsburgh. I may here, perhaps, return a little upon my steps to introduce some specially domestic and personal matters. His little daughter Ada, during the year now closing (1864), had suffered severely from her sore hip; abscesses frequently gathering and causing her intense pain, so that she was obliged to take frequent doses of morphia to quiet her. Mr. Dickerson's own health, too, was far from good. His throat troubled him somewhat, his appetite was poor, and his nights often were nearly sleepless. Yet he hid his pains and griefs under a cheerful face, and however heavy were the burdens he himself was carrying, would scarcely allow them to detract from the happiness of those around him. For them he rarely had anything but words and looks of cheer and comfort.

Christmas had always been a happy time in the family circle; the children being generously remembered by distant friends and often by members of his flock, while the father and mother trimmed the

merry Christmas tree, and contributed their utmost to the festivities of the occasion. But this was a year of "war prices;" even the necessary provisions were so high that, deprived of his old income from the *Chronicle* it looked as if the customary Christmas luxuries must be largely dispensed with. The following letter, written some time after to his aunt Caroline, wife of James Stokes (the uncle who had so often generously aided him), describes this Christmas, the last enjoyed together by the family, since before another came she who constituted so largely the attraction and joy of this had been well-nigh "a year in Heaven." The letter was written from Pittsburgh where its writer was then settled.

MY DEAR AUNT CAROLINE: We were all both gratified and surprised at the appearance of a nice little note, and a package from you at Christmas. Accept the thanks of a delighted and grateful circle of little folks.

Holiday week was one of hallowed memories to me. Pleasant songs were ringing in my ears, but all seemed to close with strains of tender and almost melancholy sadness. I thought of the many happy times when dear Julia bought the toys and helped to trim the Christmas tree. And I'll tell you now what, perhaps, I never referred to before. Last year—that is, the year which closed with Christmas a year ago—had been one of the very hardest that dear Julia and I had ever seen together. Prices were so high that with all our economy we were running behind-hand. As Christmas approached things looked rather blue, but we tried to keep cheerful hearts and faces. Julia wanted a pair of blankets, but I told her to use my traveling shawl, and so she did.

She needed some articles for herself, some nice gaiters and several little things; but I told her to wait until after New Year's, and then we should not have to pay for them until our next salary came in. So she waited. And we kept wondering whether Uncle James' finances would turn out so propitiously as to afford his generous present of several years preceding. But it had not come, and things looked a little bleak at the parsonage. Soon, however, Uncle James' gift came, *larger* than usual; *but I kept it a secret*. The Union State Committee of the State of Delaware, wrote me a note saying that there were in their treasurer's hands \$100, and the committee had unanimously voted to present it to me, as a token of their appreciation of my services to the State and the country. This I kept secret. So on Christmas morning we had our tree, a very pretty one, trimmed mostly with the previous years' ornaments, but, otherwise, our own contributions to the Christmas stock were very small. But kind friends remembered the children, and when Julia examined the presents, I had bought *her* a nice pair of blankets, a beautiful pair of gaiters, and several other articles she wanted. In the toe of the gaiters were the letters and presents from your dear husband, and the Delaware Committee. The surprise was complete, and we laughed and cried together. It made, indeed, a very "merrie Christmas," and ushered in a Happy New Year.

My dear aunt, I do sincerely thank you and uncle for all your acts of kindness, and all your thoughts of love to Julia, to me, and the children. My poverty is voluntary and for Christ's sake. Three times have I declined very eligible positions of profit, and twice have I been offered a handsome interest in a large and prosperous business. But I am *happy, contented* now, and should

be very unhappy out of the ministry. I sometimes cry for joy when I realize that I am a minister of Christ—honored of Him, approved of Him. I feel at times very lonely, and, when not just well, I feel discouraged. The terrible loss of Julia, while I know it was in infinite wisdom and unbounded love that she was taken away from her children and from me, has a depressing influence upon me. But I always strive to be, or at least to seem, cheerful. My surroundings here—all but the smoke and soot—are very pleasant. My church are united in me, and are, in general, a kind, thoughtful, and liberal people. \* \* \* Our new chapel will be done in the Summer; the main edifice, we hope, the following Spring. The whole affair will be fine but not fantastic. Our congregations are increasing, and are more than double what they were when I came. Several have been recently baptized; some are ready for the ordinance, and others are serious. Do pray that God may greatly bless my labors here. The children are about as usual. Ada has had one of her poor turns, but is now better. She and Lulu are making good progress in music, and the latter is going to be quite an adept at the piano. The two boys are well. Give my love to Uncle James. His kindness and love toward my dear family have embalmed his memory in my heart. Give my love also to each of the dear children at home and abroad.

God bless and keep you, and reward your life and labor of love to many whom you have helped to make happy, of whom, perhaps, I am chief.

Affectionately,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

This letter is one among the numberless illustrations of his unfailing resources of buoyancy and

brightness of temper; how he was cheerful where others were despondent, and hopeful where others would be despairing.

The course of the narrative has now reached a point where reference to herself personally, in view of relations subsequently formed, has become a necessity to the author of this memoir. The reader will appreciate the delicacy of this part of the writer's duty, and will pardon the detail which could not well be omitted in the history of a life with which her own became so closely and tenderly united.

Mr. Dickerson's second wife was the daughter of Professor J. F. Richardson, who filled the chair of Latin in the Hamilton Literary and Theological Seminary, subsequently Madison University; also, in his later life, the same professorship in the University of Rochester. She was born in 1842, the year in which Mr. Dickerson went as a student to Hamilton. He had known her, therefore, as a very little girl; while, naturally, she retained no recollection of him. They did not meet, after that, until 1862, when she was teaching in Dover, the capital of Delaware, whither she had gone, a total stranger in the State, as instructress in a ladies' school. Mr. Dickerson, happening to be in Rochester in the Fall, called upon his old Hamilton instructors, and among them upon Professor Richardson, who had then resided twelve years in Rochester. Learning that the little girl whom he remembered having tossed in his arms at Hamilton, had now reached the dignity of a Delaware school-mistress, he said that, as he



was soon to be in Dover, at the meeting of an association, he would call upon her. He was prevented, however, from coming, and about Christmas time, sent the following letter :

WILMINGTON, DEL., Dec. 19, 1862.

MISS EMMA RICHARDSON — *My Dear Sister*: It has been for several weeks my intention to make a visit to Dover, if possible, that I might renew a very pleasant acquaintance, made with a shy little girl of your name, twenty years ago. I have thus far been prevented from realizing this desire. But "as the mountain would not come to Mahomet, so Mahomet must needs go to the mountain," and it has occurred to my wife and me, that your present few days of vacation (I suppose you have one at holiday time) might be pleasantly spent with us at Wilmington. If you can make it convenient, we shall be very much pleased to have you spend the week at our house. If you will let me know the day and train on which you leave, we will meet you at the cars. With many wishes for your success and happiness, and hoping soon to greet you at our "parsonage,"

Very truly your friend,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

P. S.—Should any other time suit you better, we shall be glad to have you accommodate yourself. You will always be welcome.

The invitation was accepted, and the time stated at which the person so invited would reach Wilmington. It was natural that there should be some perplexity of mind in considering how, under such circumstances, a mutual recognition would be possible. The woman whom Mr. Dickerson was to meet,

could scarcely offer much resemblance to the child of six years, whom he had known in Hamilton. To her, on the other hand, he had simply been described as a neatly-dressed, dapper little fellow, with a handsome face and with very curly hair. She, of course, was in expectation, simply, of meeting one who should answer to this description. On arriving at Wilmington she took her seat in the waiting-room, and began to scan the comers-in. Soon a young and handsome gentleman made his appearance, who seemed so evidently the original of the picture in her mind, that she at once said to herself, "That is, certainly, Mr. Dickerson." He stood near the entrance, looked all about the room inquiringly, and then, with a disappointed air, slowly walked out. "He will be back again, soon," was her thought; and so he was. He came, this time, to the center of the room, took his position there, and slowly scanned every person sitting in the seats on three sides of it. As it came her turn to be inspected, she saw that his eye rested a moment, and he looked as if he were saying: "It must be, but it can't be she!" She looked directly at him; he came toward her, touched his hat, and in the most polite manner, said: "Madam, are you from Dover?" "Are you Mr. Dickerson?" was the reply. He immediately extended his hand, and with a most cordial look and grasp, said, "Well, Emma, I suppose you did not expect to see such a little man as I am, and I am sure I did not expect to see such a great woman as you are."

These details of our introduction may be allowed

here. The indulgent reader will permit them to one who is in subsequent pages to record incidents of a relation, so happy and endearing, into which she was led by the hand of a kind Providence — a relation which, while it has involved painful and solemn duties, has abundantly counterbalanced them by joys which, to the end of life, will be a storehouse of happy memories. The writer soon found herself very much at home at the parsonage. Julia and herself were ever after, during the brief remaining life of the former, close friends and correspondents.

Adopting, now, the first person in speaking of these events, I may mention that I had been visiting in Philadelphia during the Winter that Mr. Knapp preached for Mr. Dickerson, and spent the week previous to his coming, with Julia, while her husband was in Pittsburgh. He returned home on Saturday evening, and I left on Monday morning for New York. Late on that Saturday evening, after the children were all asleep, we three sat and talked together about Pittsburgh. As my opinion was asked on many subjects relating to the removal thither, I made several suggestions, adding the familiar language, "If I were in your place, I should do so and so in your new house." How little did I dream that I actually *was*, in the Providence of God, to take Julia's place in that Pittsburgh home, and that I was planning for myself instead of for her. When, on the following Monday morning, I bade her good-bye, it was under a promise that she would come in the Summer, with Ada and her husband, and visit us in

Rochester ; but the visit was not made, and I saw her no more. She had gone, ere the Summer, to her new but Heavenly home.

I here make some extracts from letters received during the few years of my acquaintance with Julia. I sent her at one time a handsome velvet pincushion, with a silk-lined slipper upon it, and as she was in New York with Ada when the gift and letter arrived, Mr. Dickerson answered it for her. Here is the letter :

WILMINGTON, April 22, 1864.

MY DEAR EMMA : Your beautiful present, and long, good letter, came duly to hand. Mrs. D. was away, but that does not make the slightest difference. *I* read the letter, every word of it, and appreciated it, and am now answering it. My wife always leaves home with the idea that everything will go "by sixes and sevens," in her absence, but I think I can "run the machine," and answer letters to young ladies, just as well as she can. And, in fact, if I have received anything like correct information on the subject, the ladies like to have me do it. There may be a breeze, however, when Mrs. D. comes home. She has been gone two weeks, and Spencer and I are alone; Martha, the colored cook, being all our society. I am managing affairs splendidly, and Martha and Spencer seem to be the only dissatisfied persons about the entire establishment. Spencer thinks that "hash" and roast apples three times a day for two weeks, is not as great a variety as they have at the St. Nicholas; and Martha is full of odious comparisons if I happen to over-sleep in the morning, or forget to send home any apples or meat. And for the inadvertence of leaving the cellar without coal for a couple of days, I have



been treated by her with very *dark* looks, and a general *coldness*. But I think our domestic arrangements are quite serene, and if my wife expects that everything is going to be knocked into "*pi*" (Spencer would rejoice at such a consummation, if they were of the right *type*) while she is gone, she will be profoundly mistaken. Still I do not think house-keeping is exactly my forte, yet I never yield that I can't take care of things when Mrs. D. is away, although I have been convinced of it for years.

With this "Apology for Letters," I will enter more at large and formally upon a reply to your welcome favor of the 13th inst. It was quite in accordance with a custom of great antiquity, that you should throw a shoe after my wife, as a sort of God-speed on her journeyings and visit to that great and wicked city, New York. The only mystery is that it should have fallen so gracefully and securely on the elegant cushion. But, as the mystery is with you, and the beautiful *facts* are with us (locked up in my wife's lower drawer, with her crape shawl and other valuables too nice for the common eye), we should not be over curious. Accept my thanks, and my good Julia's thanks, too, for a gift which so nicely memorializes your good taste, and your love to us. Julia, I know, will assert her independence, and write you a letter of acknowledgement in her own name, and expressing, more happily than I can do for her, all her appreciation of your thoughtful kindness. Her principal object in going to New York, was to consult with the best doctors in regard to Ada. I think from all she says in her letters, that a severe and rather dangerous operation will be recommended, to take place next Fall. This, of course, will never relieve Ada's lameness, but perhaps stop the further progress of the disease — a decay of the hip bone.



We are all in usual health, save the present "presiding elder" of the domestic institution of 909 Market Street. His principal trouble is the sleeps, which take him at all hours *of the day*, but are never dangerous *at night*. In other words, I am a little bit run down, and want rest from care and brain work of any kind. My sympathetic nature is drawn upon too much in all my professional work, simply because it is natural to me ; and second, because I am not in vigorous health just now. If the way opens, I am resolved upon a trip over the water ! So Hattie's married ! May bright and Heavenly blessings attend her ! When I first saw her, she was a shy little roll of pretty calico, with a modest little face at the top, and a nimble pair of feet as motors. She and a very pleasant little sister, used to play under a magnificent and wide-spreading tree, in front of a white house with green blinds, in Hamilton.

Pleasant days those to us all. Hard and poorly remunerated days to that father and mother of yours, Emma, but happy, I know, even to them. To *me*, those were my brightest, happiest hours. And although there hangs (to me, and I dare say to you) a cloud over Hamilton's later history, so far as pertains to the joy and brightness which once reigned there, yet my Hamilton course dwells in my memory like the sweet fragments of some delightful music not altogether forgotten. And the friends of Hamilton are the ones I love to-day. Aside from its greatness as a glorious denominational enterprise, which has ever challenged my respect, and received my heartiest co-operation, what I love most at Rochester is what was transplanted there from Hamilton. Of course Dr. Anderson's family have peculiar ties in my heart. But I must close (without wanting to). In church matters we are rather at a standstill ; very good

congregations, but few coming to "the Fountain of Life." I am not enjoying the same freedom in my pulpit work, as I do when converts are multiplying. I long for a time of refreshment, for myself and my people. Oh, what a glorious work preaching is, when sowing and reaping is all done at once! Give my love to father, mother, and the children generally; accepting a generous allowance as your share. May God's blessing be with you all.

Affectionately yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

We give below a letter from Mrs. Dickerson, in which reference is made to her husband's work for the State, and in the hospitals; and which, in many respects, is a characteristic one:

WILMINGTON, Friday, June 25th.

MY DEAR EMMA: I wonder what you think of me? I know it is really shabby of me not to write sooner; but really I did intend to, only somehow the intention was not enough. I have thought of you so often, and wished I could expect you here again. I hope you may be fixed so as to be near here another season.

Of course I have been very busy! Am I not always? If I did not have stockings to mend, and, equally important, babies to look after, I should go off as a foreign missionary, and make myself famous. \* \* \* I am regularly installed now as organist, director-in-chief of music, etc., etc.!! \* \* \* Mr. Dickerson preached at the Hospital two weeks ago, and had family prayers there twice on Tuesday and Friday. The city ministers are to take turns holding services there. A short time ago Mr. Dickerson went to Chicago, and while he was gone I went to house cleaning, and was nearly through

when he came home. You can imagine I was busy *then*. Bridget took it into her head to get sick one Saturday, and I had all the baking, cooking, and work to do for three days, and Mr. Dickerson sick all the time. O, but I was tired ! We had a most delightful visit over at Mrs. L's the other day, when they fairly stuffed us with strawberries and cream, and sent us some three different times besides, and splendid ones, too. M. spoke of you, and wished you were there with us, and so did I, for I knew you would have enjoyed it. Delaware is now well represented in the army. The last send-off was rather a joke ; a sorry joke for some, too. The 5th Delaware, of which my respected partner is chaplain (the glory MAY be great, but the pay is small), was suddenly ordered off to Fort Delaware, with about an hour's warning. It was composed mostly of gentlemen in business here, and it made the greatest excitement. Some had to close their places of business entirely, others leaving them in charge of a boy. It was amusing, though, for all. The Sunday schools are pretty much deprived of male teachers; and the choir of the church over the way had not a man left in it. It took from the Dupont Mills one hundred men, and from other places accordingly. A part of the regiment left on Saturday, and the remainder were as suddenly ordered off Sunday evening. When we came out from church, the street was so crowded we could not get to the pavement for some time. The drums were beating, the fifes playing Yankee Doodle, and it was altogether unlike Sunday. The church over the way had quite a shaking up on a recent Sabbath. A young man preached a strong Union sermon, and a few of the "Coppers" could not stand it, and seven of them got up and went out, among them our next door neighbor. It has made a great deal of

fun. Ada has been sick for a week back, with a mild kind of typhoid fever, but is getting better slowly. Her leg is very bad and painful. She just begins to sit up now. Spencer has gone off on a sailing voyage with his friend, Le Roy Webster, to Cape Henlopen.

How I do wish you lived near us! I kinder sort o' feel that I have a claim upon you! When are you to be married? The coming Winter? Mr. Dickerson wishes particularly to be remembered to his friend Emma. Remember me kindly to your father, mother, and sister.

As ever, JULIA.

All these letters will show how poor and precarious Mr. Dickerson's health was, and yet how constantly he kept at his work. We give an extract from another one, from him, written in October, 1864, after a stay of a day or so in Rochester during his Summer vacation:

MY DEAR EMMA: Your letters, ever welcome, will be still more so now that I have revived the pleasant associations of the past, as they gather about your much loved family circle. My last visit has recovered much that seemed lost to memory, besides adding new treasures to my store. I did have a very pleasant visit, and I can not wait until the close of this letter to send my love to father, mother, and *all* the children. May God's infinite goodness be round about the household, as an angel of mercy and guidance to the better land, where we all, in Christ, shall happily and eternally meet! Since my return, our little Ada has seen many dark days and nights of intensest suffering. But for several days she has been free from sharp pain—the abscesses having broken—and she enjoys tolerably good sleep, either with

or without an opiate. She has a famous appetite, which we sit by and feed with all the delights of parental cannibalism. And to be sure of the path of duty, it is "not by bread alone," but by chickens, birds, chops, and all the delicacies of the season which we can honestly lay our hands to. This is the only hopeful sign in her little sky, so strangely darkened and disturbed. But she is patient always, and, when not in the very pinch of pain, quite happy and contented. The rest of us are as usual. I am pretty well, although I had a sort of bilious knock-down a week or so ago, in which I think I rather got the worst of it. I don't care to try it again. My eyes are decidedly better. All send love. Julia will write soon.

Affectionately yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

It will be seen how tenderly, in this last letter, he speaks of Ada, who was, indeed, a constant sufferer. Her afflictions had commenced when she was two years old. Recovering from an attack of sore eyes, she had a severe fall which injured her hip and sent the disease there. It gradually increased in severity until repeated abscesses were formed, and when she was nine years old there were five or six open sores upon her hip. For weeks while they were forming, she would often scream from the intense pain; while her father and mother, often through long and weary weeks, were night and day unremitting in their attentions. Ada was a child alike beautiful in face and lovely in character. Her constant association with older people rendered her more than ordinarily mature; she was gentle and loving, grateful for every kindness, and disposed to



do all in her power for herself. She was devotedly fond of reading, enjoyed having her mother read aloud to her, and listening to the stories spun from the fertile brain of her father; stories of the Revolution, of the Indians, of everything, often exquisitely humorous, often ingeniously and delicately inculcating some moral useful lesson; and, in their racy drollery, as interesting to the grown folks as they were to the children. Ada, too, inherited much of her father's cheerfulness and playfulness of spirit, of his humor and his wit, as well as of his uncomplaining patience and fortitude amidst suffering. Yet well might the sunny cheerfulness often give way to pensive sadness, when sometimes she was for weeks so sore that she could only be moved on a sheet, and the jar of a footstep in the room threw her into a nervous torture.

She had a natural ear for music, caught tunes readily, and was the dependence in singing of the infant-class in the Sabbath school; so much so that, when she was prepared to enter the main school, she was retained in this as the head singer. Thus her musical talent seemed the handmaid of piety; and, when a very little child, sleeping in a trundle-bed near her parents, she awoke them one night by singing, in a clear, ringing voice, the hymn containing the words,

Let us walk in the light,  
In the light of God.

From some notes made by her father regarding her with the purpose of embalming her history in a Sabbath school book, I make a few extracts:

Ada, though she was not a natural Christian, loved to read her Bible and to hear it read. She had a pretty little Testament, and in May, 1864, as I went to visit the wounded soldiers of the Republic, she lent it to me. I gave it to Ira C. Ritch, from Hendersonville, Pa. He was shot in the shoulder; had a wife and four children at home. "My hope is strong in Jesus, but I miss my Bible," he said. I gave him Ada's, and her satisfaction was unmingled when I told her about it. She soon was presented with a Bible, which she often kept under her pillow, and in which she marked many passages she loved. Her favorite chapter was the 14th of John, beginning: "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

*Feb.* 12, 1865. I preached in Pittsburgh—went home to a glorious revival!

*March* 9. Sydney Ross, our children's nurse, gave her experience. Ada was converted shortly after. Her experience on Monday evening, May 1, 1865. How she spoke, leaning on her crutches! Among other things, she said, "I think I ought to love the Bible more!" Her mamma and oldest brother baptized with her on Wednesday evening, May 3. How sweetly she acted in the baptistry, as the deacons lifted her down to me, and lifted her from my arms after baptism! while the choir sang,

Thou hast said, exalted Jesus,  
 "Take thy *cross* and follow me."  
 Shall the word with terror seize us?  
 Shall we from the burden flee?  
 Lord, I'll take it,  
 And rejoicing—follow thee.

This hymn was ever a favorite with her and with me.

*May 7.* I gave them the hand of fellowship. We gathered at the Lord's table. It was the first, and—on earth—the last time we were all together. The next communion was in Pittsburgh! Spencer, Ada, Sydney Ross! Again the hand of fellowship—*one* was not there.

Thus much from her father's notes. Ada believed that if she had not been "afflicted" she should have continued to go "astray;" that to the sorrow of her life she owed her life eternal. Of her conversion she said: "I put my head under the covers that night and asked God to forgive me, and he did." Her prayers were habitually earnest, direct, full of simple faith—like her father's. One incident, in this record of a child, we may be pardoned for narrating:

One cold winter night, kneeling by her father to say her little prayer, and appreciating her warm and comfortable home, she prayed: "And now, O Lord, bless the poor people. If they are hungry give them food to eat; if they are cold, give them clothing, and send them some coal; and, even if they are naughty, Lord, do bless them, do." When she rose from her knees, she said, "Now, papa, I suppose that, to-morrow, when the Lord sends the coal and the other things to the poor people, they will think that some big folks, like you or mamma, prayed for them. They will not think it was a little lame girl, will they?" The next day in Philadelphia, Mr. Dickerson met a city missionary with whom he was well acquainted, and told him of Ada's prayer. He said, "Well, go home and tell your

little girl that the Lord has answered her prayer and helped the poor people, and that, too, when they were naughty and had very little faith." He then related to him how, that morning, when he felt that he could not look presentable on the next Sabbath in his very shabby suit, and yet knew not how he could get a better one; when he needed coal and food and necessities for his family, he had come to the city, and, walking down Chestnut Street, had fallen in with a wealthy Baptist, the proprietor of a large clothing establishment. This gentleman knew him well and the good work he was doing in the city. He said to him, after a few minute's conversation, "I want to know, now, if that is the best suit of clothes you have." He replied that it was. "Well, come with me, and I think we can improve your appearance." He took him to his store, fitted him out with a new suit and overcoat, gave him money for a hat and boots, and a check for the purchase of some home necessities. Ada was delighted at hearing the story, and believed that the incident was a direct answer to her prayer. Perhaps we may share her faith, even though the term "naughty" did not quite hit the mark that she intended. She certainly was not thinking of praying missionaries. But the great Prayer-hearer is sovereign in His answers.

These incidents give a glimpse of Mr. Dickerson's home life, of the burdens he had to bear, while they show some of his own traits reproduced in the character of his child. Unfortunately he was not solitary in those sad domestic experiences. How many



a life shines out in brightness upon the public from a darkened home and a burdened heart! But with few has there been greater harmony between the public and the domestic life than with him. When the light did not shine round him from without, it sprang like a living fountain from within.

The illness of his daughter was not his only affliction of this nature. The last letter given from him of October, 1864, referred to an improved condition of his eyes. He had been through a very severe attack of typhoid pneumonia, in which his physicians had given him over, and he lay seemingly on the verge of the grave. His children had been sent away; bells in the neighborhood were muffled, and all was shrouded in the gloom of impending death. A little incident so incongruous with the circumstances, seems yet so characteristically fitted to *him*, that we can scarce avoid narrating it. His children had been separated from him for more than a week. In an hour of a little relaxing of the severity of the disease he had them sent for, and as the little ones gathered around the bedside, he asked them if they could not sing a little song for papa. They readily complied, but with a child-like obliviousness to the tragic character of the scene, and to his laughing horror, instead of the expected "I want to be an angel," or "There is a happy land," they piped up, in animated chorus,

A frog went a courting; he did ride,  
Sword and pistol by his side,

and so on through all the frolicking stanzas. The uncontrollable laughter from which, in his weakness,



he feared disastrous consequences, proved, perhaps, a good medicine, and illustrated in a way that the "Preacher" never thought of, the truth of his apophthegm that "there is a time to laugh."

On his recovery his eyes continued for a long time so weak that he could scarcely use them at all in the evening. My father, learning his condition, wrote to him, proposing that he should join my sister and her husband in a trip to Colorado and Utah, as likely to prove very serviceable. He replied as follows:

JULY 6, 1864.

TO PROF. J. F. RICHARDSON.—*My dear friend*: Your kind letter to me of a recent date, and that to Mrs. D. from Emma, are at hand and duly appreciated. The interest you both evince in my personal welfare is a source of true satisfaction to me, as I feel that our old friendships are still warm. As for Emma, my entire household has long since marked her as a rare specimen of "the true, the beautiful, and the good," and her appearance in our circle knocked one of my favorite proverbs high as a kite; viz., that about valuable fabrics being done up in small packages.

As to going to Utah, my wife seems to think that you have got the idea into your heads that *she* is in poor health, and that, therefore, the matrimonial atmosphere of Salt Lake is recommended to me. She says her eyes are not yet impaired, and "she don't see it" at all. Our arrangements are all completed for a different trip; so, much as I should delight in being one of the merry party to Salt Lake City, I shall not be able to undertake it. I go for a few days to the seaside, starting next week. I shall leave Julia and my little sick girl there, and, with the others, go to New York and spend a few

weeks on Long Island Sound at my brother's. I may get to Rochester to Commencement. I must have a good, long rest, and my church have voted me two months if necessary. With love to all, I am,

Affectionately yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

In reply to a letter from me, written in the Summer of 1865, after the death of his wife, he says:

Your letter of the 25th ult., intended to strike me at Pittsburgh, *glanced* and reached its mark at New York City, just as I was "on the wing" for the hills of Connecticut. A good shot! How much I thank you for it; it seemed as though it *revived* some of the dead music of the past. Just as I have had some faintly lingering echo come to me, long after the sound which had evoked it and all its answering echoes seemed to have died away. The truth is, *you know* more of the happiness of my inner home-life as it was, than any other of the dear friends who have yielded me their sympathy in correspondence; consequently, I welcomed your letter as I would one from my own sister Grace, Mrs. Van Dusen. (Then, after telling where he has been, and where he spends the remainder of his vacation, he says): My health is much improved, and I am getting a better appetite, both for food and sleep. I am also trying, not only to get, but to reflect more of cheerful sunshine. I feel very unworthy the smile and favor of the Saviour, but I do not the less value them—rather the more. I feel more than ever a desire to work on faithfully, hopefully, cheerfully. Any common bird can sing when the sun shines; but it requires a gay-songed, a heaven-aspiring lark to rise from dark and rain, and

sing *above* them. I feel that God, in great love, has left some work for me to do. O, that I may do it, and all the better for the sad training through which he has called me to pass. Give my love to your father and mother, and each member of the family circle. My own little ones are well—Ada better than usual. Spencer is with me; the three youngest are with Aunty Jane on a farm near Pittsburgh. With sincere good wishes, I am,

Affectionately, your friend and brother,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

## CHAPTER XI.

### RESIDENCE IN PITTSBURGH.

To this "smoky city," but to an intelligent and excellent church, Mr. Dickerson came in May, 1865, with a burdened and sorrowing heart. He had come in the exercise of his characteristic faith. Just after the burial of his wife, as he was sitting with his little ones about him in the house of his friend, to his sister's inquiry, "Well, James, what are your plans? what are you going to do?" he replied, "I hardly know; I have not quite got my hand into that of Jesus, but he will guide me." He *did* guide him. The aunt to whom we have referred, went with him and remained more than a year; his family was cared for, and he came into the bosom of a thoughtful and sympathizing people. Of his reception in Pittsburgh we have already written.

He found the church engaged in the work of raising money for their new chapel, while worshipping in a public hall in the center of the city. He put aside his own private griefs, and immediately placed his shoulder under the common burden. The church labored with him in hearty sympathy, and, in the following winter, the handsome stone chapel, with its large Sabbath school-room containing a beautiful fountain, and the very tasteful audience room above,

seating between five and six hundred persons, was dedicated.

From his first coming to Pittsburgh Mr. Dickerson took a high stand, alike as a preacher and a Chris-



FOURTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
PITTSBURGH, PA.

tian citizen interested in all good works. His genial disposition and fascinating manners, his ready sympathy with every form of goodness and of suffering, his uniformly easy, graceful, and earnest eloquence, made him a general favorite, and constantly sought



for on public occasions. In Sunday-school gatherings, and temperance societies ; in asylums, penitentiaries, and for the various charitable institutions, his voice was often heard and always with delight. The church grew in numbers and in strength, the Sabbath school steadily increased, the prayer-meetings became larger and more earnest, and the small audiences of the public hall enlarged, until the average Sabbath attendance of the chapel rose to above four hundred. The already completed chapel and tower, with the lot upon which the contemplated church was to stand, cost altogether \$80,000. This amount was all paid while Mr. Dickerson was pastor, and only the excessive pressure upon the manufacturing interests of Pittsburgh prevented the erection of the church building itself during his pastorate. As it was, it was not dedicated until 1875.

Mr. Dickerson did not believe that because a church had contracted a debt, it was authorized to curtail its gifts for benevolent objects. He held that the Lord would prosper it in its domestic finances in proportion as it proved faithful to all the claims of Christian benevolence and charity. Statistics will show how his teachings in this regard were acted upon. The contributions of the church to benevolent purposes during the first year of his pastorate were \$290.00 ; during the last year, the fifth, they were \$1,137.00. The average contributions during these years, including payments on the chapel, were \$14,000.00.

To a Presbyterian brother clergyman, an old friend, who he thought was not happily situated in

his church, he wrote soon after entering on his pastorate:

Your letter had a rare welcome. If you want an appreciative correspondent, I'm your man; you need look no farther! I have often thought of you since we filled ourselves with beef-steak and melon at your cousin's expense. It's well to teach these laymen practical lessons as to what it costs in these days to keep a "clergyman." Poor soul! I hope he does not judge of "the cloth" generally by the illustration which was at my right hand that day! You did do *splendidly*. I almost envied you your appetite. But a man may have too much of a good thing—as your astonished cousin, I doubt not, inwardly soliloquized. You'll never catch him opening a boarding-house for clergymen. \* \* \* How I do wish you could get into a newer, fresher, and more encouraging field! Would that your church appreciated your faithfulness and devotion! God bless you, and keep you faithful, even if they are cold and heartless. *Your time will come*; and if you will patiently let God fix it, you will say when it arrives, "Thank God that it did not strike an hour sooner." We can not, we ought not, to shield or apologize for cool, criticizing, half-hearted, or hindering brethren and sisters; but, to a certain degree, I suppose we ought to stomach them—for the Gospel's sake; but the Lord knows it's an awful gaggy dose!

Here, I have a large salary in dirt, smoke, etc., etc., but my brethren are coming up to the mark, and seem to think that I am "*the gem of the seas*," and they are brethren of excellent judgment! We shall soon begin to build. We have fine lots; but I have sometimes wished that every member of the First Presbyterian Church here would have the jumping tooth-ache, until

they voted that we might have their house and lot at prime cost. I judge from your silence that your son experienced no severe hurt from the stone thrown at him. I am glad to hear of his improved health. God spare him for health, happiness, and usefulness; and as the merchant said in his prayer for his children, "Ditto, Lord, for all the rest, assorted sizes!"

Oh, when skating time comes, how I shall think of you, and long and pine for the days of "Auld lang syne!" Ah me! Give my love to your dear wife. I think I would fight about as quickly for her as for any living mortal. If she asks for any stronger evidence of my fraternal interest and affection, I should despair of satisfying her.

As ever, yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

As he closed the letter, I presume it occurred to him that he had not mentioned the children, or said much to satisfy a woman's inquiries, so he added:

Yes, there is lots of news in this letter, too, Mrs. B. ! The children are well; I am better; butter is seventy-five cents a pound, chickens one dollar and twenty-eight cents per pair; the weather really delightful; I am going to Philadelphia soon; I hope to get another house April first; shall have a nice parsonage if I live long enough; I am expecting my sister, Mrs. Van Dusen, here soon to get the children ready for Winter. Thank the Lord for good women !

Mr. Dickerson's Pittsburgh pastorate was naturally less eventful than that in Wilmington, and will require less detail. He spent much time in pastoral visiting, and the more as his people were scattered

over an unusually wide area. The smoke and soot of the city had driven many of the citizens to the suburbs, and some of the most influential families in his church lived from five to ten miles, and some even farther still, from the church. He averaged about five hundred visits a year during the five years ; and the results were seen in the enlargement and prosperity alike of the church and the Sabbath school. And when those whom the pastor had instructed and comforted in their homes, found their steps drawn to the sanctuary, they did not come in vain. His sermons were inspiring, and (as with most good preachers) to know his pulpit power was to hear him among his own people. He rarely wrote an entire sermon ; but he put more thought into them than is found in many a written sermon, and to careful and thorough preparation he added an easy elocution, and a directness and earnestness of address which were exceedingly impressive. He combined two essential constituents of eloquence ; intensity and clearness of conviction, an unhesitating flow of language and an unfailing instinct for concrete and pictorial expression. He spent, generally, five or six hours a day in his study, and his intense application during this time made a heavy strain upon his vital powers. This, with his frequent visiting, and almost incessant calls from without, so taxed his energies that only the great buoyancy of his temper, and almost hilarious flow of spirits saved him from much earlier exhaustion. He wrought the labors of a man with the enthusiasm of a boy ; and, when wearied by duties which no



amount of enthusiasm could prevent from being wearisome, he always found refreshment and invigoration in the sympathies of a happy home. Here he could relax the tension of his soul, throw off for the time his burdens, and, in almost frolicsome unbending, gather strength for the next morning's toil of intellect, and the next afternoon's round of pastoral duty.

Besides his other labors, he wrote almost weekly for some of the religious denominational journals; his faithful and facile pen was ever ready in exposure of what he deemed error, or advocacy of some important truth or duty. He also accepted a virtual challenge from a Methodist clergyman, who stated in one of the Pittsburgh papers that he had repeatedly affirmed that immersion was not scriptural baptism, and that no Baptist had ventured to contradict him. Mr. Dickerson determined to relieve this Goliath of the trouble of any similar challenges in future. He carried on a controversy with him in the *National Baptist* for about three months, maintaining his positions with cogency and learning. The argument resulted in the defection of quite a number of the adherents of Methodism to the Baptist ranks.



## CHAPTER XII.

### MARRIAGE AND HOME LIFE IN PITTSBURGH.

Mr. Dickerson went to Pittsburgh in May, 1865. He remained a widower until the Autumn of 1866, when the friendship which had for years existed between him and the present writer, took a tenderer and more intimate character; and, instead of complying with an invitation to teach in Vassar Female College, I accepted (as he playfully informed Dr. Raymond, and as I was not wholly indisposed to deny), "a better position;" and, following out the acceptance, I accompanied him to Pittsburgh. I was entering an untried sphere indeed, but a familiar family circle, and one in which all my associations had been peculiarly delightful. I had reason to anticipate the happiness which I found, and every day and year only developed and heightened the congenial sympathies which first drew us together. In him I found only love, and tenderness, and care; all the thoughtful regard for my wishes and opinions that the most strong-minded asserter of the privileges of the sex could ask. From his children I ever had loving obedience. Just after our engagement he wrote, "A happy, delightful day! May thus it be, 'walking together' till life's journey ends, and the Heavenly Sabbath dawns!"

He adds in his diary :

*Tuesday, Sept. 4, 1866.* The marriage notice. Started for Niagara Falls. Thank God for hopes and home !

*Tuesday, Sept. 14, 10:40.* Reached home ! May God make the happiness of myself and family redound to His glory.

Again : Bless the Lord for all His unusual and precious gifts and tokens of favor of which I feel so unworthy.

The years 1867 and 1868 brought to our hearts and home both joy and sorrow. In November, 1867, our first child, Florence, was born. She was a beautiful child, becoming early full of fun and frolic, and looking very much like her father. Her coming, a joy to us all, was an especial delight to Ada, who would amuse herself with her for hours. In connection with this one, I may record an instance of Ada's singular unselfishness. She had in December one of her periods of intense suffering, which could be allayed only by large opiates, but in all which she was unfailingly patient, now and then in her paroxysms, praying, "O Lord, please stop this dreadful pain, and come and take me to Heaven." Yet, when little Florence became ill and I was attending upon her, while her father was at Ada's bedside, soothing her with songs and stories, she said to him, "Poor tired mamma, she does not get any rest, night or day. I wish I could take the baby's pain, for I am used to it and could bear it better."

But ere long the blows of death came in rapid succession. In February, 1868, after a long and painful illness my father, Prof. J. F. Richardson, of

Rochester, passed away. He was just sixty years old, and being blessed with an excellent constitution—this was his first serious illness within my memory—he was in his full physical and mental vigor. This is not the place to record his eulogy. But a daughter may bear testimony to the thorough integrity of character, the uniform uprightness of conduct, the high sense of duty and of honor which won for him universal esteem, and even more emphatic testimony to the gentle virtues, the unfailing sympathy and kindness that illuminated and gladdened the sanctuary of his home. It was where he was best known that he was most esteemed and loved.

The first agony of grief for my father was scarcely over, when Ada suddenly began to fail. Her appetite, which had been excellent, was gone, and she herself became conscious that her end was near. Her child-like faith, however, was strong, and she loved to hear of Heaven, though she would sometimes say, "How can I leave you all, and our dear little baby?" Her pain could be alleviated only by large doses of morphia. One night, her father coming home late and exhausted from his labors, and finding her in distress, went for the accustomed dose of morphia. The bottle had been forgotten and was empty, and the place for replenishing it was a mile distant. He told her about it, and, kneeling down, asked her to join him in a prayer that God would give her rest and sleep without the morphia. After a soothing song she fell asleep and rested until morning; and, as she saw her father in the morning, she said, "The prayer was just as good as the morphia,

wasn't it?" Her father, a believer in prayer, probably thought it was; yet would not have been tempted by the belief to forego a fresh supply of the medicine. God, he believed, gives answers to prayer, but not to presumption.

Toward the last of May Ada failed fast, was much of the time unconscious, and talked incoherently. One of her little utterances, tender and touching at the time, was stamped soon with the deeper pathos of an unsuspected prophecy: "Yes," she said, midway between sleeping and waking, "I have two mammas; one is on the earth, and one is up in Heaven. If I die I shall see mamma Julia;" and then, after a moment, she added, "But what could I do without my dear little baby? Ask and receive. I'll ask the Lord, and perhaps he will give me one there." Alas! (we thought a little after), Ada's prayer has too surely reached its mark, and Heaven has been enriched by and for her at the expense of our double affliction. But as yet our hearts did not forbode it.

Her father, meantime, talked to her of Heaven, and pictured, as he beautifully could, its glories and pleasures; and her favorite aunt, Mrs. Van Dusen, of New York, who kindly came a few days before her death, did much to soothe her, and aid us all in the trial. In the early morning of May, just after she had said, "I hear the bells ringing: how sweetly they sound!" she quietly breathed her last—one moment listening and talking, the next moment deaf and mute forever! How close on the mystery



of life is the mystery of death! In the family Bible her father wrote:

“Ada Pauline Dickerson, oldest daughter of James S. and Julia S. Dickerson, died sweetly and in Jesus, May 29, 1868, at 7 A.M. For ten weary years she suffered a painful affliction, which she endured with remarkable patience, and under the sad yet refining influence of which she was led to Christ, and grew into a loveliness of Christian maturity as remarkable as it was beautiful. Her trust was in Him who is ‘the resurrection and the life.’”

In his diary he wrote: “Monday, June 1st. Darling Ada placed in a grave at Alleghany cemetery, awaiting the glad summons of the resurrection day. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!”

Although but thirteen years old, Ada had been necessarily so much with older people, that she was very mature, and I found in her a congenial and sympathizing companion. The affectionate care of all the household clustered about her, and with her brothers and sister, in the absence of papa and mamma, her wishes and advice were final. As we laid away her little crutches, we could but rejoice that the need of them was forever past, but we missed day by day her glad presence, and her loving ways.

She had been but a few weeks in heaven when her half prayer, half prophecy was fulfilled, and the summons came for our precious little Florence. On Monday, July 6th. she was taken suddenly and



violently ill, and Ada's words, "What shall I do without my baby?" came to our hearts with a thrilling, and hitherto unthought-of meaning. As the day wore on, and that fearful disease, *cholera infantum*, seemed to take a death-like hold of the dear little flower, I thought, "Can it be that Ada is about to have *this* baby? Can it be that her prayer is about to draw my little angel to the skies?" Ada did not mean this. If Guido, "dizzy with heaven," forgot to turn away the ball, he surely did not direct it to its mark for the sake of a speedier brotherly reunion. Yet, if this was the unconscious import of Ada's prayer, who shall deny that it is in mercy? Who knows from what "evil to come" the little one is taken away? Snatched, perhaps, to the fold of the Heavenly Shepherd, ere its feet have strayed into paths of earthly sin and sorrow. Would parental love prolong this life to Ada's years at the cost of Ada's suffering? The mother's heart may be forgiven for shrinking back from the fatal record. Yet the dreaded event came, and, shortly after ten o'clock at night, our first-born, the darling of our hearts, and the light of our home, was gone. Her death was five weeks after that of Ada. Her father wrote in his diary: "Died suddenly, Monday, July 6th, at 10.30 P.M., our precious little daughter, Florence, aged seven months and sixteen days."

And so, within six months, the Angel of Death came thrice into the circle of our loved ones.

Insatiate Archer, could not one suffice?

These successive sorrows, to me fraught with

sadness and depression, as I vainly struggled with grief over my first-born, Mr. Dickerson looked upon with a Christian eye, and saw the bright side of every bereavement. He had been early disciplined in the school of trial, and his Christian faith taught him that, while the mysteries of Providence were beyond solution, yet many things might be partially comprehended by him with whom is "the secret of the Lord."

I quote a few lines from a letter written from McKeesport, near Pittsburgh, where Mr. Dickerson attended an association a short time after Ada's death:

Here I am, and *hard at work*. I have a nice place to stay, and brother Everson is my bed-fellow. The service is an interesting one, and promise is yielded of considerable animation and discussion. It seems both strange and sad to me, as my mind turns homeward, that I have no message to Ada to send, no anxieties to nurse, and no prayers to offer in her behalf. We do not know, darling, just how much we love, until we are tried by bereavements. How tender we should be to one another in view of the fact that some day we shall be separated, and that forever — so far as this poor world is concerned! I feel that I want to be more loving and careful and truly tender, in all my future life, toward the dear ones whom I love and who love me. \* \* \* Give my love to the dear children, not overlooking the sweet little hair-puller and eye-scratcher, who does take so much after her mother. Kiss her and the others for me, and accept a few choice specimens for yourself. As I have opportunity I will

\*write a few lines again. With much love, darling, and hoping I shall find you stronger and better, I am,  
Affectionately, your loving and lover-husband,

JAMES.

Writing from another association, or convention, in a distant part of the State, where Baptists were not as wide-awake as he wished, he says:

Here I am, safe and sound. I had a good rest, and a fair amount of sleep, for me, in the sleeping-car. I had several pleasant companions on the way. We reached here at 7 A.M., and after breakfast and hanging around for an hour, I reported myself to the "Committee on Delegates," and received a card of introduction to a very pleasant family. I left my valise and shawl, and then sat down in the reading-room of the hotel to fulfill my promise to my absent, but not forgotten, wife. I am mighty glad you did not come. It rather humbles me to go, with my hat and card in hand, to ask hospitality of strangers, and they Presbyterians. To have you do it would be far worse. Then, too, I know you would have become sick and tired of the whole performance. Things are very *one-horse-ish* here among some Pennsylvania Baptists—and I guess always will be until the "second coming." Dr. Castle, of Philadelphia, if he comes, is to be my *chum*. He is a fine, gentlemanly fellow. Mrs. Dr. Loomis, I hear, is in town, and Dr. L. is expected. If they do not put me on for any service Thursday evening, I think I will start that night, and get to Pittsburgh in the morning. But now I must stop and go to the depot, and see if the Philadelphia delegates have arrived. Drs. Henson, Wheaton Smith, Weston, Randolph, and a few others, are expected. Give my love to the children, and tell them they must

help you all they can, and give a good report of themselves when I get back. Good-bye, dearest. While I do not wish you were here, I do wish I were with you. Home is the brightest and cheeriest place on earth to me. Even our Pittsburgh home seems very bright, compared with any other spot that is not home! May God bless and keep you all. All my thoughts are in some way related to home and you.

Your own dear husband,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

From another letter, written from the Hudson, where he was spending a few days at his uncle James Stokes' summer home, we make a few extracts: "The day is a real October one, reminding us of the days that are to come; those 'melancholy days,' over which the poets have sung in such sad numbers. And yet there is something very inspiring to me in these Autumn times, and I feel more sympathy with the animation of the squirrels that were chattering in the woods to-day, than with the frightened birds that were sailing sadly southward this morning. \* \* \* I am beginning to make arrangements for my homeward trip. I want to impress myself, by the help of God, on my field this fall and winter, as never before. I want to work and study hard and effectively. I want to get up earlier, and be a little more systematic, and make every day tell. If my head does not give out—this dizziness, I mean—I think it will tell for good, on me and on my field.

"I think I may say that it is quite settled that Uncle James will help me in my trip abroad. He said, the last time that I talked with him, that *he*



wanted me to go once on a skimming sort of a trip, seeing a good deal in a little while. Then, he wanted me *to take my wife*, and make another slower and longer trip, that would give us something to talk about the rest of our lives. He talked as if he was ready to do a generous thing when the time came. \* \* \* But, darling, I would rather have you and half a visit, than go without you and have a whole one." \* \* \*

From a letter received while I was making a visit in Rochester, in 1869, when I was talking of prolonging my stay a little, I quote a few sentences :

I have read your last letter, just received, for the second or third time, and, while it is a comfort and satisfaction to hear from you again, it awakens a strong desire to have you safely and lovingly at home. As to prolonging your visit, I would try to speak impartially if I really could, but I have an idea that my prejudices are a little *warped* in your favor. As to home affairs, there is nothing in the housekeeping arrangements that absolutely calls for the presence of its "stirring" head. In this respect we are not suffering. I have no doubt there are little neglects in pantries, closets, etc., which will come to light when you return ; but that will make no difference a thousand years hence. \* \* \* As for your "own precious," why his opinion on a matter of this kind isn't to be trusted at all. I do not know how it looks at Rochester, but there are all the appearances here of a hard; wintry week. The snow is falling at intervals, the sky looks very threatening, and I should feel greatly relieved to greet you safely from storms and worse alarms on Saturday



evening, should you conclude that it is not best to extend your visit.

We began our extra meetings last Wednesday night, but as yet they have not been fruitful in any special results, although one young man, I believe, is out in the clear light of a hope. Would that I had more of that simple resting on God and His own work! \* \* \* We all think of you and talk of you, and conclude that a large part of the family circle has been taken away, and a mere, lonely segment left. If a little separation is worth anything, it is because it reveals the true depth of our love for absent ones. Thank God that we need this kind of discipline so little! How few retain the freshness and simplicity of heart love as we do, darling! Of this kind of love the poet sang when he breathed so sweetly on his lute,

'Tis said that absence conquers love,  
But oh, believe it not!  
I've tried in vain its power to prove,  
But thou art not forgot.

And surely we have been separated often enough and long enough to test, that

Though absent, present in love we be —  
Our souls much farther than our eyes can see.

Stay a few days longer if you wish, and telegraph me in time so that I shall not be looking for you and be disappointed. I do not think there is much danger, especially in *coming this way*. But good-bye, darling, until we meet, either in peaceful correspondence, or "in arms."

Affectionately yours,

J. S. D.

Some time before this an Eastern church in a beautiful city wrote to him, urgently and repeatedly

begging him to become their pastor, and offering some unusual inducements in the matter of a salary and a nice parsonage. Referring to it in a letter he writes what we quote below, and soon afterward declined the call, feeling that it was still his duty to remain with the church in Pittsburgh and endure the dirt, which was a great trial to him and to us all. He says:

“The claims from —— are pushed again. But I want the thing decided on principles that will stand the test of a view from the dying hour. I am not disposed to shirk every sacrifice, and when I think what other ministers have had to endure, and what Christ undertook for me, I feel that it is quite likely that unless I move very carefully and in the fear of God, He may change my average of a very happy pastoral life to one that would show much more of trouble, anxiety, and even sorrow. The friends here constantly enquire about you and send love to you. Tell Ada her letter was tip-top; but I would like to know where she gets note paper with ‘A. P. D.’ on it? Such notions of extravagance have just got to be ‘put down.’”

In a letter addressed to Ada a few days afterward he headed the letter, written on a large square letter sheet, with a fanciful *J. S. D.*, and addressed her as, My dear Miss “A. P. D.,” which amused her very much.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### REMOVAL TO BOSTON.

Mr. Dickerson closed his labors in Pittsburgh in May, 1870. In the April previous he had accepted a call to the South Baptist church in Boston, Mass. The circumstances of the call had seemed singular and providential. In 1865, while the church in Pittsburgh was worshipping in Masonic Hall, before the completion of their chapel, a Mr. Pettingill, from Boston, visiting his son-in-law in Pittsburgh, a member of this church, heard Mr. Dickerson on the Sabbath morning, and was drawn by his interest in the discourse to repeat his attendance at the church on a very oppressive evening. He returned to Boston with an estimate of Mr. Dickerson which the lapse of years did not efface. Nearly five years afterward, when the South Baptist church had been for four months without a pastor, Mr. Pettingill, as chairman of the pulpit committee, wrote to his "Western man," inviting him to come and preach for them, with a view to a call. The letter came while Mr. Dickerson was spending two or three weeks in New York. He had, even during this year, received repeated invitations to other fields; but had declined them. This, however, impressed me as none of the others had; and when my

husband read it on his return, he said, "I have never felt as I do now about leaving Pittsburgh. I have a conviction that the Lord's hand is guiding us to Boston. What do you think?" In reply to the request he wrote as follows:

FEBRUARY 19, 1870.

MY DEAR BROTHER: Your letter of the 15th inst. is at hand, and I thank you for its kind references to myself, and its clear statements with regard to the church which you represent. Since its reception I have given to the important subject, which it suggests, much serious and prayerful consideration. Never during my five years pastorate in this city have I gained the consent of my conscience and judgment seriously to consider any invitation to other churches, although, in several instances, both pecuniary and other inducements were very strongly in favor of the fields to which I was called. But I frankly confess that a different state of things surrounds me now, and, should Providence open the way, I should consider myself at liberty to entertain the question of a change. The church of which I am pastor has, by God's blessing, reached such a position of prosperity and strength, that a change of pastors need not embarrass any of its interests, and might, indeed, promote them all. When I became acquainted with the First Baptist Church of this city, its property was worth less than \$9,000, and its two hundred scattered, discouraged, and weakened members worshiped in a very poor public hall. Now, its beautiful chapel with the land on which it stands, including lots for our projected main edifice, all worth \$60,000 or \$70,000, are practically paid for, while our membership has increased to about three hundred and fifty, and our

*working* strength quadrupled. The main edifice is not likely to be begun for some time yet. Hence the altered circumstances which make me feel that the Master's cause here need not suffer injury by a change of pastors.

He then speaks of the pleasant relations between him and the church, and of the pain which would attend the sundering of the ties which bound him to them; while he yet deems it possible that the Lord may be preparing him for it, and, if so, it will conduce to the highest good of all.

Having a natural shrinking from appearing before the church in the attitude of a candidate, he suggested to the Boston church that instead of his going to them they should send a committee of two or three to hear him at home. But Mr. Pettingill wrote that there were not two or three men in the church who would take such responsibility, and if there were, the church would not be satisfied to be represented by them. However, to make the matter less embarrassing, they arranged that but few of the church should be aware of the precise state of affairs. In reply to a letter stating this, he wrote:

\* \* \* I am grateful to you and the brethren with whom you counsel for the judicious and considerate plan you have adopted in respect to my visit. It is a very undesirable position to occupy when a minister, who wants to preach in view of the judgment of the great day, is almost of necessity compelled to thoughts of the "judgment" his hearers are passing upon him; and while, as an individual, I know little of what is called the fear of men, I am conscious of great sensitiveness when I stand before an audience. Extempor-



aneous speakers who "kindle" with the inspiration of their hearers are placed at a great disadvantage when they are left to the poor thoughts of their mere personal relations, or acceptability to those whom they would persuade and move. Would that I could always be clear above these lower considerations, and lift my hearers and myself to the realization that the work in which we are engaged, while it demands the very best gifts, can not be successfully prosecuted by mere human appeals, however captivating, or convincing, or persuading they may be in themselves. No, not with enticing words "of man's wisdom." Wherever I may preach may I have your prayers that I may be a faithful, bold, yet loving, preacher of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Mr. Dickerson went to Boston the last of March, attended the Friday night prayer-meeting, preached and baptized on Sunday the 27th, and left for Pittsburgh on Tuesday morning. Of the church meeting which was held that Tuesday night, Mr. Pettingill wrote: "In the height of a driving north-east storm we assembled in our vestry last night, and found the largest number present I ever saw at a business meeting." Then, after speaking of the remarks of many in regard to giving Mr. D. a call, he says: "Every speaker expressed himself clearly and unequivocally in favor of extending you a unanimous call, and when a motion to that effect was made, seconded and put, the moderator asking for a rising vote, every one present arose. There was no machinery, no electioneering, but one free, full, hearty outburst of a sentiment pervading every heart here. It was the largest vote ever cast for a pastor, not-

withstanding the severe storm without ; a unanimous vote, notwithstanding we have heard fifteen candidates, and most of them, if not all, above the mediocrity of preachers, and many of them having strong friends in the church. To my mind there is no way of accounting for this hearty unanimity, but that our blessed Redeemer is moving upon all hearts in our dear church, and that ‘ God has led us by a way we know not.’ You should have seen the thrill of pleasure that each countenance exhibited when the vote was announced. No words of mine can give you an idea of what our eyes saw and our ears heard. Our meeting closed about ten o’clock, but it was nearly eleven o’clock before the people left the vestry. To what can we attribute this wonderful result, but to the hand of our blessed Lord? Our brothers and sisters say it is an answer to prayer, and to-day among those I have seen there is but one theme—the result of the meeting, and their hopes and expectations touching your acceptance of our call. In all my experience I have never witnessed anything approximating such a feeling as now pervades our church. \* \* \* Let us hear from you as soon as possible, for the days will seem like weeks until we do.”

Another member of the church writing to a friend after this meeting, says, “ Glory to God in the highest—praise the Lord! I don’t know that I can contain myself long enough to write, but I will try. It is raining *very* hard to-night, but in spite of it, I never saw so large a number at our church-meeting as we had to-night. We took a vote for pastor, the

largest vote ever recorded on our church books, and Dr. Dickerson had *every vote cast*. Is not this God's work? We have heard fifteen candidates, and the most of them able men, and I was afraid we could not be united. I know that before Dr. D. came we could not have got more than a two-thirds vote on any one we have heard; but when he came he united every heart of the church and congregation. I wish you could have been here and seen the interest manifested. Never in the history of the church, since I have been connected with it, have I seen anything like it. Men grasped each other by the hand, and women went here and there praising God for his wonderful goodness to us in thus uniting us. \* \* \* We believe we have the finest field to work in where a man can make himself useful for his Master, in Boston, I care not where the church is. \* \* \* Dr. Warren, of the Missionary Board, says, 'I hope he will come, you can't do better,' and so say many others. They say we want him here, in the 'Athens of America.'"

There are other letters of the same tenor, but these will suffice to show how quickly and how thoroughly all hearts were turned toward him, and how enthusiastic was the call to Boston. In April Mr. Dickerson accepted it, and preached his first sermons as pastor on Sunday, May 15th, from the texts, "He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied," and in the afternoon, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation." The latter sermon was noticed, with a brief analysis of it, in the *Boston Journal*.

As at Pittsburgh, so at Boston, Mr. Dickerson was cordially welcomed into the circle of the ministry, and was at once recognized as among the leading preachers there. His audiences increased steadily, and in his evening services, generally adapted more especially to the young and the unconverted, the large audience-room and galleries were crowded. The usual practice had been here, as generally elsewhere in New England, to have preaching services in the morning and afternoon, followed by a meeting for prayer in the evening. Desirous to reach a large number in the community who would not attend at his church in the daytime, nor could be drawn to a prayer meeting at all, as also feeling unable to preach two sermons in such close succession, Mr. Dickerson innovated on the old system, and, with the concurring action of the church, transferred the preaching of the afternoon to the evening. The result justified the change. Multitudes of young people were drawn, either from other churches, or, more commonly, from their saunterings in the streets or by the sea-shore, to the place where the Gospel was proclaimed with earnest and often with thrilling eloquence. On one occasion two young ladies, members of a Universalist congregation, being attracted to his evening service, listened to a sermon on the "speechlessness" of the guest who was found at the kingly banquet without the wedding garment. The effect on the audience generally was very marked, and the two young ladies went home alarmed over their spiritual destitution. A lady with whom Mr. Dickerson had a



pleasant acquaintance, gently taking him to task the next day for preaching such fear-inspiring sermons, and stating that these young ladies had passed a sleepless night after hearing him, "Good," he replied, "I am glad to hear that they were touched by what they heard. I hope they will give themselves no sleep until they have made their peace with God, and are entitled to a robe of righteousness which will fit them to appear at the marriage supper of the Lamb."

We have already adverted to Mr. Dickerson's leading characteristics as a preacher. He was, by unanimous consent, an easy, graceful, effective, and eloquent speaker; forcible in manner, fluent and often extremely felicitous in expression, rich in illustration, solid and sufficiently profound in thought, and his whole elocution vivified by unmistakable Christian fervor—"Truths divine came mended from his lips." As a preacher of Christ he sought to declare the whole counsel of God. If he delighted in the milder, he did not shrink from the sterner, utterances of the Gospel. If Calvary was in the foreground, Sinai was as uniformly in the background of his picture. Through his Christian fidelity a "violated law spoke out its thunders," while, with a more loving readiness, from a heart and lips on which had descended its richest balm, "the Gospel whispered peace." He sought to preach the whole Gospel in its rounded fullness. His morning sermons, generally more elaborate, and designed more especially for Christians—though rarely closing without an appeal to the unconverted



—were, to the thoughtful hearers, a feast of fat things. His reading of the hymns was often strikingly impressive, and many will recall the glowing and almost inspired fervor with which he read such hymns as,

In the Cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time,

and felt that no one could doubt, were it even but from the soul which he threw into that reading, that he *did* glory supremely in the Cross of Christ. He usually spent about fifteen minutes of the morning service in commenting on the scriptures which he read, and his expositions were often exceedingly felicitous and instructive. Many a passage opened itself luminously to the hearers. Then followed the sermon, which always commanded a rapt attention to the end.

Of his pastoral labors we really need say nothing. To a man so constituted, so tender, so social, so sympathizing and magnetic, and then transformed by grace, to be a good, faithful, and beloved pastor was a moral necessity. No wonder then that he won the unanimous and enthusiastic love of his people. One of the members of the church recently writing of him to me, says, "I thank God we are to have that precious life *written*. I have often wished it could be done! Such lives are rare, and its influence will be greatly beneficial to all who have the pleasure of its perusal. I wish we might have some of those inspiring sermons in the memorial! O, how I enjoyed them! It seemed to me he was inspired—I believe he was full of inspiration, for there was an *unction*

in his sermons rarely met with. I did appreciate him when he was our pastor, and felt then that we were a favored, happy people. He spoke the truth so plainly, but always *in love*. How ready he always was to endorse every good thing! He never waited until a thing was popular, but his great heart and mind could take it all in, could see the end from the beginning. When I think of all he accomplished during the five years here in South Boston, it seems as if he must have been with us a life-time. The place is dearer to me because he and his loved ones have lived here, and I *know* that Boston will ever feel the influence of his noble life—I have ever felt that our church would be a hard place for his successor, the people were so thoroughly attached to your beloved husband.”

We insert here from a series of articles entitled “Pulpit Portraits from Boston,” published in *The Examiner* in July, 1870, the following sketch of Mr. Dickerson :

The former connection of Rev. J. S. Dickerson, D.D., with THE EXAMINER would sufficiently prepare your readers to welcome a warm tribute to the many merits of another new Baptist clergyman of Boston. Called recently from Pittsburgh, Dr. Dickerson has already strongly established himself in his new field of labor at the “South Baptist” church, and in the affections and confidence of his people. Much is expected of him, and his pastorate will be no sinecure ; but evidently he is not a man to covet easy places. He enters into his work with a skill and animation that shows the practiced hand and the grace-taught heart. We attended one of his

evening services a while since, and heard him blow the gospel trumpet with no uncertain sound. His text was the Saviour's golden declaration, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," and a well-filled house listened intently to his sermon till the close. The discourse was topical, pictorial, and though in portions somewhat diffuse, quite clear and forcible. One illustration (of the event of repentance, and its joyful effect "in the presence of the angels of God,") would dwell long in a hearer's memory. It was an instance from the speaker's personal recollections, of a company of repentant rebels gathered out of several regiments of Confederate prisoners at Fort Delaware during the war. The scene of the oath-taking was vividly drawn, the washing of the soiled and tattered troop in the river (apt emblem of baptism, though the preacher did not turn aside to use it), their rehabilitation in "loyal blue," and finally the *joy in the presence of the army* when they marched to the sound of music, on the parade-ground, and took their place in the ranks of the country's defenders.

Dr. Dickerson has a pleasant voice and natural gesticulation. We noticed nothing affected in his manner or utterance. Men will be apt to hear and remember the truth told from his lips. Occasionally he uses a quaint phrase, and sometimes breaks out with an unexpected apostrophe; but his style is not daring enough to be dangerous to the general good effect, and he never grows boisterous. He is short of stature but shrewd of head.

Warmly we joined in the Doctor's expressive prayer, at the close, that the congregation might not turn away that night in wooden insensibility, "like a door turning on its hinges;" and when we went out, we carried with

us the conviction that the South Baptist church had secured the right man.

In August, 1870, Mr. Dickerson made a trip with one or two of his members to Montreal and the Saguenay River. He thus writes:

MONTREAL, Aug., 1870.

I am in Her Majesty's Dominion. The hotel is nothing to speak of, although it is much spoken about. To tell you the truth, I prefer the board at Dickerson Hall to anything we have as yet attained. \* \* \* We had a splendid day yesterday on the St. Lawrence River, from Ogdensburg to Montreal — down among the rapids all the way. It was novel and inspiring. This morning we went into the Catholic cathedral here. I will tell you all about it when I see you. It is a fine building, but otherwise a perfect humbug — pictures, furniture and all. I received your letters, and read them before I ate my supper last night. They were like water to a thirsty soul. I am going to read them again in a few moments. I do hope you are having a nice time, and I think you are. I believe it will be greatly to the physical well-being of you all to enjoy the air and water of Owl's Head. I shall be disappointed if I do not have a few more days there with you. \* \* \* I am already looking forward to work and comfort in our nice new house, in the fall and winter. I think we have hopeful and joyous prospects before us. Never were we more comfortably or honorably situated. A good position, a good field, and warm, hearty appreciation and co-operation! Let us be grateful, and try to be more consecrated to the great and noble work in which we are permitted to engage — for which we are privileged to make sacrifices! I doubt whether I shall ever



again have any better opportunity to serve the cause of Him who has done so much for me — so much that, but for His grace, I should have been a poor, miserable, inefficient, and ignoble character, not to say worse. All my social position, all my poor attainments in mental, moral, and social culture, I owe to Jesus, who pardoned me my sins, and started and helped me in a better and upward direction. And among my blessings I count the joyful coming of my dear, precious Emma. \* \* \* Mr. P. is a rare good man, and an enjoyable traveling companion. Remember me to the family at Owl's Head, and particularly to the Cheneys, who have been so kind to us. \* \* \*

From a letter written while I was in Rochester, N. Y., visiting my sister, Mrs. Robins, who was very sick, and who died a few months after, we quote a few sentences:

I am sorry to read your words of discouragement as to Maggie! Could she not stand a slow journey hither? And if so is there not hope that the salt air and magnetic treatment would help her? I should not want to take any responsibility in the case, for she might die on the way, but if they should deem it best I will do all I can to make the experiment a successful one. \* \* \* Dr. Fulton goes to Brooklyn! I think it is a great mistake; and yet it may be one of those mysterious "providences" which occur against all human calculation, and sometimes in spite of them. He goes right off, I believe. Next Sunday I propose to settle the debt business. My preference was to defer it for awhile — but some of the folks thought it best — "now or — always." The thing will be put through, I hope. They want you to pledge the Ladies' Circle for two hundred



dollars, to be paid during the year ! The Sunday school will give one hundred dollars or more, in addition to what they have done. \* \* \* I feel very sad about affairs in Rochester ; but it's all right. Sooner, perhaps, than we think, we shall all be reunited in that better country, where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying. I do not *expect* death, as you sometimes seem to think I do ; but I no longer dread it. I love life as ever, and am as hopeful, buoyant, and trustful as ever of the future ; but I am a good deal less earth-bound, and feel that the greatest thing is to cultivate that work, those friendships, and that inner spiritual life which will gladden and bless the sweet and eternal hereafter. \* \* \*

Don't cut your visit short ; but expect a cordial and joyful welcome at its close. \* \* \*

A letter written to Dr. Warren Randolph, whom he had known and loved for years, we are glad to insert :

425 4TH ST., So. BOSTON, May 23, 1870.

MY DEAR RANDOLPH : You see where I am ! There's no knowing what a man may come to who starts in life with even pretty good prospects. Actually here in "Down East." No "flourishin'," no "in-coming tides of immigration," no "vast rivers running to the sea," no "westward-the-star-of-empire" fallutinism to sing ; but simply a down-east Yankee, where a fellow has got to work or starve, to *be* something or else to be a nobody ; where splurging don't go half as far, or accomplish half as much as it does elsewhere ; where, in fact, a man is valued far nearer his actual weight, and where the weights are looked into more impudently than anywhere else on this continent — that's just where I am.

You see at a glance, Randolph, the situation. I have

brought my traps to a poor market, but here I am, and I am bound in a true Yankee spirit to "go in."

I had expected to have seen you in person on my way hither. I had hoped to have stopped at Philadelphia for a day or two, but concluded at the last to come *via* Rochester, New York, that Mrs. Dickerson might see her kindred and friends.

I preached my first sermons a week ago yesterday. Am to be "recognized" next Sabbath evening. After *that*, hope to be able to do a good deal better.

Thus far I have been favored with good audiences and favorable opinions. I do earnestly hope and confidently believe that God's blessing will be with me. I have a fine field and I think a fine chance. Come over and explore with me. I shall be glad to welcome you and Mrs. R.

I am pleased as well as any man need to be. It will be my own fault or misfortune if I do not accomplish something here for Christ and the Baptists in South Boston.

I am almost settled in a snug little house, and will be glad to greet you at my door. God bless you and your family and your work. I thank you, Randolph, for your fraternal interest in and love for me. I want to show you in some way that I appreciate it and you.

Hoping you will pray for me in my difficult work and new field, I am

Affectionately yours,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

I fear I can not be at anniversaries.

Mr. Dickerson had scarcely been a year in Boston when his labors began to "tell" upon him. First he had some of those afflictions popularly known as "Job's comforters"—a succession of terrible boils,

at one time thirteen of them on his neck and throat. These threw him into a fever, and when sufficiently recovered to resume work, he looked pale and miserable. He would not, indeed, be recognized as a sick man, told those who undertook to condole with him, to look for some more fitting objects of their sympathy, and declared that he "could do as much work any day as two or three of your big, fat, vealy fellows."

But he *was* sick, however indisposed to acknowledge it, and the fact was palpable to everybody but himself. It was evident to the church that he needed a long and thorough rest, and of course his mind and that of his friends turned naturally to that grand panacea for diseased throats and overworked brains and shattered nerves—a trip to Europe. But how to compass it? His church was not quite in a condition to meet all the expenses attendant on both the absence and journey, and his own finances, following the customary fortunes of Baptist clergymen, had not expanded into very magnificent proportions. In fact, between ordinary household expenses, and those occasioned by the visitations of sickness and death, he had not yet succeeded in extricating himself fully from debts contracted in his years of business. We insert here a letter or two illustrating at once his business embarrassments, and his conscientiousness in dealing with debts which, though legally outlawed, still stood valid in the forum of conscience and of honor. In 1871 he wrote to Rev. H. J. Botts, of Manchester, England, an old newspaper correspondent of the *Chronicle*, sending him a

part of the amount due him, nearly one hundred dollars, and asking for information regarding the entire amount. He received the following reply :

“I was not a little surprised to receive a letter from you not long since. The remittance you speak of, which, after the ‘writing off’ of the affair years ago, I ceased to anticipate, will, as it happens, *be very useful just now* on the birth of our *tenth* child. But I am more delighted and deeply moved by the *truly Christian spirit and sterling principle* evinced by this communication. The righteous Lord will surely supply *all your need in the future* according to His glorious riches in Christ.

“I had quite forgotten the amount due to me from the *Chronicle*, and have had to hunt up old memoranda to supply the information you ask.” Then he gives a statement of the account, and adds, as Mr. D. had mentioned a contemplated trip to Europe, “I trust you will enjoy your contemplated tour! I spent three months five years ago in Italy and have most interesting reminiscences of that city (Rome) and its historic and sacred associations. I half envy you your daily rambles in the city and Campagna! I trust you will come back by Manchester and Liverpool. If you do, let me know, and I will meet you at the station, give you a bed, and bread and cheese at my house, and pilot you round this cottonopolis. Do *come*. A hearty welcome awaits you. My wife desires to express her thanks for your kind Christian wishes, and her high appreciation (with mine) of your treatment of us in this matter.”

In connection with this letter we step back for a



moment to give another from Rev. C. E. Smith, who had been, in like manner, an unpaid contributor to the *Chronicle*, but to whom in 1869 he found himself in a condition to discharge his obligation. The tenor of his letter to Mr. Smith will appear from the following reply :

CINCINNATI, Nov. 23, 1869.

MY DEAR BROTHER DICKERSON : I fear you have too good a memory for your own interests. It is not at all according to "the wisdom of this world," for a man to remember and to offer to pay a debt, long since incurred and outlawed, and, moreover, abandoned by the creditor. It would be in the highest degree accordant with that kind of wisdom for me to take advantage of your offer, and send you my bill. But I shall do no such thing. I intend to show myself equally foolish with yourself. I know too well how hard it is to pay old debts out of a pastor's salary, to be willing to allow you to pay me in that way. I accept the loss as my small share of the sacrifice which the war entailed upon the *Christian Chronicle*. Consider this as a receipt in full, and regard yourself as my debtor in future only in respect to "love and good works." I am sure I am much indebted to you for the example of integrity you have set me. I am very glad to have had this opportunity to reopen a correspondence which as you say was a pleasant one. Will you not write me again at your leisure without reference to the subject of your previous letter. I hope I may meet you personally before long and enlarge the acquaintance which has heretofore been purely epistolary. I beg, and my wife also, to be remembered to Mrs. Dickerson, with whom we both enjoyed some very agreeable intercourse in Rochester.

Fraternally yours,

C. E. SMITH.



At a later period, as the last of these business creditors, Mr. Dickerson wrote to the firm of G. & C. Merriam, of Springfield, Mass., assuring them that, although for years his salary had barely sufficed for his support, yet he had not forgotten his indebtedness to them. He received a few days after the following reply :

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., March 3, 1874.

REV. JAMES S. DICKERSON — *Dear Sir* : We have your favor of Feb. 28th, and we beg to express to you our appreciation of your offer to settle the balance which you suppose to be due us. We have not been able to find any record of the account, and would therefore leave it with you to remit such a sum as you believe to be right. In case you are in circumstances somewhat straightened, we shall take pleasure in considering the matter as settled without a remittance from you.

Yours Truly,

G. & C. MERRIAM.

Mr. Dickerson immediately wrote again, giving them some dates, and mentioning circumstances which would bring to their remembrance the old debt, which amounted to about eighty dollars, without interest, and received in reply a letter, from which we make some extracts : “ \* \* \* We have your favor of the 9th inst. We now recall more particularly the original circumstances.” The writer, having gone over them, at the close of the letter says : “ It is never our policy to be exacting ; and, as your experience has been a trying one, we enclose return draft to your order for half the amount, waiving all claims of interest. Hoping you may

have Job's experience, and your latter end be better than the beginning in earthly matters, we are very truly yours."

We return from this digression on Mr. Dickerson's finances, and financial honesty, to his present illness. His need of protracted rest and change of scene was apparent; but it was not equally apparent how he was to attain them. But at this juncture his uncle, James Stokes, came nobly to the rescue. He had formerly aided him in purchasing the *Philadelphia Chronicle*, had remembered him munificently in New Years' presents, and extended to him at his home an unfailing hospitality. He now came forward with the offer of one thousand dollars to meet the expenses of a trip across the Atlantic. His brethren in the church cordially seconded the proposal; and when he laid the matter before them at a large meeting, and threw himself upon their decision, unanimously voted him a leave of absence for four months, to be extended at his pleasure to six months, and supplemented the resources furnished by his uncle with a pledge to continue his salary, and supply at their own expense the pulpit in his absence. This generosity toward a pastor who had been with them less than a twelve-month, moved his heart alike with joy and gratitude. It attested strikingly that magnetism of his nature, by which he could not merely command esteem, but inspire affection. The quick sympathies of his spirit evoked equally quick responses.

Still his joy was not complete. The provision for his perhaps larger—I fear, not better—half were

wanting. He seemed destined to go alone, and to this neither he nor that other half looked with complacency. For myself, in truth, I scarcely contemplated the possibility of his going unattended by me, and I had a strong, though apparently not very well founded, presentiment that the way would yet be opened for my accompanying him. It *was* opened. Just as I had assured him, in reply to some gentle caution from him against over-confidence, with its probable disappointment, that I "felt it in my bones" that I should go, he opened a fresh letter from his uncle, and called out to me, "Come, old 'bones,' here is something to gladden you!"—he might have added, "and cheer you in your new rôle of prophet." His uncle had written that, in talking the matter over with his wife, they had both agreed that it would be better in every way that Mrs. Dickerson should accompany him; so he had enlarged the sum originally promised, had paid their "passage over, taking a double stateroom in the new steamer, 'Oceanic,' of the White Star Line; and I want you both to be on hand and ready to sail on the third of June."

My husband's enthusiasm which, while he had anticipated a solitary journey, had not been high, was now kindled and glowing; his first tone of banter was immediately exchanged for utterances of devout gratitude which should be evinced in deeper future consecration, and then we both set about our preparations in rapid earnest. So strong, undefinably strong, had been my convictions that I should go, that my personal preparations, in the way

of wardrobe, etc., were almost entirely complete. Our oldest son was to remain in Boston, our two younger children were to make their home with my mother, in Rochester; Mr. Dickerson went personally over to Newton and engaged three of the professors in the Theological Seminary there to minister to his people, and, in view of the possibility of our never returning, left a sealed package containing directions for the disposition of his property, and his wishes regarding his children.

Our preparations were soon complete. Our assembled people sang, evidently from their hearts, just before we left:

As on the deep thy servants sail  
O give them, Lord, the prosperous gale,  
And on their hearts, where'er they go,  
Let all thy heavenly breezes blow.

To which chorused prayer our hearts united with theirs in responding "Amen." Then we were in New York, and on the 3d of June, 1871, we bade "our native land" a temporary "good-night," and in company with the eldest daughter of Mr. Dickerson's brother Thomas, were soon on the "Oceanic" careering

O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,  
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### VISIT TO EUROPE.

We left New York on the third of June, 1871; we reached it in returning on the third of October following, after an absence of just four months. Our route lay through England and Wales, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and back through France, England, and Scotland. We traveled uniformly by day, never missed a train, and with our four eyes saw as much, I think, as eight or ten eyes do commonly within the same time. Mr. Dickerson had quick powers of observation, a ready perception of contrasts, and his keen sense of the ludicrous as well of the beautiful, and his unfailing humor, made the journey an exhaustless source alike of pleasure and of profit. His health rapidly improved, his cough almost entirely left him, and when he reached Switzerland, and began to climb its mountain passes, and its nearly inaccessible heights, following the chamois to their cloud-enveloped homes, or, as the diligence wound around some serpentine path, making a short-cut across, and dropping down upon us suddenly from some overhanging craggy eminence, he felt all the buoyant exhilaration of the mountain atmosphere, while his soul thrilled and his frame quivered with exultant joy over the picturesque and



far-spreading grandeur by which he was surrounded. He enjoyed intensely his three weeks roaming over Switzerland, and returned reluctantly to the crowded haunts of men, even though they replaced with the numberless and matchless charms of art the majesty of nature.

In all this journeying Mr. Dickerson remained true to his character of a Christian pastor. Before starting out on each day he had family worship in the hotel, and he always observed the sanctity of the Sabbath, uniformly seeking out, when it was possible, some place of public Christian worship. The theater he, of course, avoided as conscientiously as he would at home, and from any of that license which too many Christians, and I think some Christian ministers, allow themselves under the relaxing influence of foreign usages and the plea of being beyond the danger of influencing by example, he systematically and rigorously refrained. He was abroad the consistent Christian which he had been at home. He could not go any where *mutilated* of that religion which was a part of his life.

Yet of all innocent amusements he was ever true to life and the soul; he sympathized to the full with the pleasures of both old and young. His presence was the light and inspiration of any gathering. On his brother's yacht he would entertain the party untiringly with his vivacious humor and quick repartee, and then at request dash off a few verses commemorative of the occasion. The following lines extemporized after a week's trip, as the bounding boat (named the "Fleur-de-Lis") was nearing the

harbor, will show that he had not a little both of the soul and the rhythmical sense of the poet:

## THE FLEUR-DE-LIS.

My beauty! 'tis for thee  
My graceful Fleur-de-lis  
    My harp shall ring.  
Of all thy masts and spars,  
Decked by our gallant tars,  
With stripes and glorious stars,  
    Joyful I sing.

When zephyrs softly blow,  
When waters gently flow,  
    And skies are bright,  
Thy wing-like sails all fair,  
Filled with the balmy air,  
Banish each land-bound care  
    In calm delight.

But when the tempests roar,  
And skies are fair no more,  
    And oceans yawn,  
Staunch drives the Fleur-de-lis,  
O'er every stormy sea,  
Her flag and pennant free,  
    Bright as the dawn.

When outward bound we ride,  
And homes behind us hide  
    In distance far,  
With joy we hail the wave,  
Where wildest billows rave,  
Home of the strong and brave,  
    In ocean's war.

But when we're homeward bound,  
And joys we sought and found  
    Are left behind,

Sad though our parting be,  
 Bright be the memory  
 Of joys amid the sea  
 Forever shrined.

And so, life's voyage past,  
 When tides are failing fast  
 On time's last shore,  
 May hope and memory blend  
 In voyage without end,  
 On seas no storm shall rend  
 Forevermore.

September 13, 1869.

J. S. D., *Chaplain.*

Of Mr. Dickerson's brief tour in Europe he made very large jottings; a very model, perhaps, of travelers' notes, showing that his eyes were open upon everything. They are full of condensed information. On our return he delivered two or three lectures in South Boston relating to his journey. From his notes for the lectures, which lie before me, I give a few opening jottings:

My style—"Conversational."

My design—"To have you see with *my* eyes."

My matter—"What most folks would omit."

So if I get eloquent it is a mistake, and you are at liberty to stop me short and drown it out, as is often the case with us speakers, "with uproarious applause."

\* \* \* \* \*

The effects of judicious and extensive travel!

Aside from health, information—its lessons of patience (under difficulties)—human nature.

*E. G.* Sea-sickness—wife sick—myself not sick, but feeling "so mean that even my stomach became dis-

gusted with me." Before I was out three days I felt like "throwing up" the whole trip.

### THE OCEAN!

It is all very well for Byron, canopied by the fair skies of Italy, and lullabied by the music of the Mediterranean, to sing,

Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll;  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain.

\* \* \* \* \*

Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;  
Such as creation's dawn beheld—thou rollest now!

"No wrinkle!" we will call them dimples.

"Thou rollest now!" That's not bad. We all did that—we were rolled out, then we were glad to "roll in."

The awful strength of the ocean,  
The desert waste of the ocean.

The highway of nations—the pathway of nations.

"Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee!" Yet we saw but three vessels on our outward passage.

The following are some of his letters to his children:

STEAMER OCEANIC, Monday P.M., June 5.

MY DEAR SON: This is my first attempt at writing since we started. We have had a splendid run thus far, and fully tested the sailing capacities of the *Oceanic*. Scarcely one has been sick thus far, but a considerable number begin to look sort of "squeamish." The ocean has not been as rough any hour as we have seen it on the Sound. \* \* I have been thinking of you since we started, and hope the Summer will pass pleasantly

and even quickly along. We shall have lots to tell you when we get back of what we saw in Europe. \* \* \* *Saturday, June 10.* A week on the ocean ! O, what a sick and wo-be-gone set !. We have tried to be jolly, but it was no use. I felt like "throwing up" the whole trip before we had been out five days. We have spent two or three days in bed, but we are getting better now. The voyage has been a splendid one for speed, and everything save *sickness*. We have seen some rough seas and high winds, and have had a new impression of the awful grandeur of the ocean, and the power and greatness of the infinite God. How blessed to have Him as your friend when feeling that imminent and terrible dangers are near.

*Liverpool, England.* Here we are, safe and sound ! We have had some big weather. I preached on Sunday in the morning when the sea was quiet, but in the evening the sea rose high, and again and again made a clean sweep of the main decks. One of the waiters came near being washed overboard, but was rescued by one of the officers. On Thursday night we shipped a very heavy sea, and since then the engineer's steward has been missing, and no doubt he went to a sudden and watery grave. One night was particularly terrible to me, although the officers laughed at its being regarded as at all dangerous. Still that night the captain was creeping about softly until after one o'clock, and was still on deck when, for the second time, I went below though not to sleep.

I thought of you and Lu, and Willie ; of Boston, the friends, and the church ! I was glad to know that if the ship did go down, as it seemed at one time she would, when she fell over on her lee side and rolled down, down, down, swinging, trembling down until the waters



gurgled over her, and for a second she did not seem to stir!—(It was to me fearful!)—to know that my sins were forgiven—my heart changed by God's Holy Spirit—to *know* that Jesus was my friend, though I was a poor, miserable sinner—to know he had saved my soul! But the thought of the loneliness of those I should leave behind me, should I be taken away, made me pray earnestly though inwardly to Him, who holds the waters in His hands. \* \* \* In a few days we leave London direct for *Rome*, via Paris if we can get through. Mamma sends love and seven kisses, and I make the number an even dozen. Your dear father,

J. S. DICKERSON.

DIJON, FRANCE, June 28, 1871.

MY DEAR LULU: Here we are in a real French village, and in a real Frenchy hotel. This place is about two hundred miles from Paris. We left that city at three o'clock in the afternoon, and reached here at midnight.

You know they have had civil war in Paris; one part of the citizens rising against the other part, and men, women, and children have been killed in the strife. The fighting was done right in the streets, and all the buildings in the vicinity were marked by bullets and chipped off, and in some cases battered like forts, and in others burned and a mass of ruins. If you could get hold of some views or descriptions of Paris, you would read about the magnificence of the Tuileries, the Palais Royal, the Column Vendome, and the Hotel de Ville. Well, they are now in indescribable ruins. I have large and beautiful photographs of them as they were, and as they *are*. You will see them when our voyage and rambles are over, and we are once more at home. I have wan-

dered a good many hours looking at the gay windows of the shops, and at the funny sights inside and out of the stores. It seems quite refreshing to hear any one speak English. Mamma is well, and sends love. She helps us greatly with the French. You and Willie must learn to speak it. Mamma is still in bed, but I got up early to get these letters off.

From another of the same date to Willie, who was nearly nine years old, he writes:

MY DEAR WILLIE: I have written to Lulu in a great hurry and must do the same to you, but don't take this as a specimen of my writing; you know I can write tip-top when I am not in too big a hurry. \* \* \* This French business is a funny affair, I tell you. When we were in Paris, and were planning to go to Italy, they told us we ought to have a little flask of whisky or brandy to use if we should be suddenly taken sick. So I went into a store, a kind of hardware store, to buy one. I said, "Parlez-vous Anglais?" That means, "Do you speak English"—and the clerk shook his head, no. Then I began to make them understand what I wanted by a few French words and some gestures, and soon a pleasant smile broke over the face of the clerks, and they said, "Oui, oui, oui," that is—"Yes, yes, yes"—and came up bringing me a *demijohn*! I told them no, I wanted one more "*petite*"—smaller, and then they brought one about as big as a baby. Then I put my hand on my pocket, so as to show them I wanted one I could carry there—then they smiled all around and said, "Oui, oui," and brought me a small pocket *cork-screw*! I began to be discouraged, and they looked innocent and then wise, then surprised when I shook my head and shrugged my shoulders in

true French style. Then I went over the whole case, and was slow and careful, and all of a sudden the whole matter was as plain to them as could be, and they exclaimed, "Oui, oui," and came back with an immense *powder-horn!!!* Then I made a straight line for the door saying, "Pardon, pardon." That pocket-flask cost me much walking and talking, whenever I had a leisure hour. I shall have to tell you more about it.

Here the people are very polite, and if you make all sorts of blunders, they don't laugh at you, unless they can't help it, poor souls! Two or three times when we have asked some one to direct us in the street, they have run after us to tell us we were going wrong, or to give us fuller or better information. It almost made me cry to see how tender the younger people were to the old folks. Several times I saw young men or young women pushing small carriages with old people in them. Soldiers are seen almost everywhere in Paris. The war is over, but troops are camping in all the magnificent gardens and parks; soldiers pace the streets, guard the ruins, stand sentinel in and around the churches. The people in religious matters are very ignorant but very devout. They go to church as a mere form, many of them, and kneel and cross themselves and bend almost to the ground. They are nearly all Catholics. Dear Willie, how favored we are that we know about Jesus, and may go to Him and pray to Him, feeling that He will hear us and make us Christians in our hearts, so that when we die our hearts will still love Him, though the body is dead, and can not kneel, or speak, or pray. I hope my dear Willie is often found praying to Jesus out of his heart. \* \* \*

CHAMBERY, FRANCE, June 29, 1871.

DEAR SPENCER: Here we are on or near the boundary of Switzerland on our way to Turin and Genoa, at which

latter place we expect to stay over Sunday. We are all usually well. I do not seem to pick up flesh as I expected to, but my throat and lungs have ceased to give me any trouble, and my cough has stopped altogether. We are making for Rome as fast as it is well to travel, and expect to reach there in a few days, unless we conclude to go from Genoa by boat. \* \* \*

This place is more like an Italian town than any we have seen in France. The people about the hotel as we came in last night had, to our lady folks, a regular banditti look, which they did not like. When we were shown to our rooms, the walls and steps and balustrades were all of solid, gloomy masonry, and when we entered them, we found the windows grated like those in prisons, and the very floors were stone. The ladies were thoroughly frightened; but as it was near midnight, and the other hotels were full, I told them philosophically that if they could not bring their minds to go to sleep, they could stay awake all night and watch each other.

\* \* \*

*Turin, Italy.* We have reached Turin after the most magnificent day's ride we ever enjoyed. *We have crossed the Alps.* We came over Mt. Cenis by rail on what is called the Fell Railway. But the magnificent scenery! The deep, deep, valleys smiling in sunlit verdure—the awful mountains overhanging yet lost in the clouds and covered with perpetual snow. I send you some violets which grew at the base of Mt. Cenis, whose head is covered with eternal snow. When the sun falls on these snow-clad peaks they look like frosted silver, banked up and behind the clouds. As we were descending the mountain, the moon came out and touched the peaks and lighted the dark shadows of the valleys. \* \* \*

This city is one of the most beautiful and modern of



Southern Europe; its population about 200,000. Victor Emanuel seems to be quite popular, and his pictures and busts are seen everywhere. We walked through the Palais Royal this morning and saw some fine pictures and statuary; and in the armory some grand old relics, among others a sword worn by the 1st Napoleon, and one of the eagles that was carried at the head of his armies. \* \* \*

DEAR LULU: You have written us some real good letters, and you deserve to have a good one from each of us. You must not forget to ask us to tell you about the Falls of Giesback—near Interlachen. The falls are narrow but very high, and at night the waters are illuminated with calcium lights of red, white and blue. It was very beautiful.

To-day I went up a thickly wooded mountain on mule-back, and crossed the Mer-de-Glace, the broadest glacier near Mt. Blanc. It was a steep climb, and the crossing was dangerous, but it was a grand sight. I will tell you more about it. Then too, I must tell you about the strange clock at Berne—where, when the hour strikes, bears come out and dance, and a rooster crows, and an old man strikes a bell, and a monkey lifts his ears. In the same city was a fountain, with a statue above it, and on the top, a big, fat, giant, ogre-looking fellow eating up little children, as though they were so many raw oysters. One little fellow was just going down and his legs were sticking out of the giant's mouth; a game bag held about a dozen more, and three or four more were fastened in his girdle. I should think the children in Berne would hardly dare go down that street. You must get hold of some nice book of travels and read about these things; they are as entertaining as a story, and far more useful. \* \* \*



ROME, July, 1871.

DEAR SPENCER: As I have a few moments before breakfast I will write a few lines to you. We expect to be received at half-past ten this A. M. by "His Holiness, Pio Nono." We were there once before, but as our note of introduction had not been previously (at least one day before) sent into the old chap, he declined to see us;—or rather his officials declined to let us go in. I felt a little like telling them they were a great set of humbugs, from the Pope down. Our guide said, as we stood waiting to see whether we would be presented, that if we stayed in the ante-chamber where we were, we could *see* him as he passed, but could not speak to or shake hands with him. He added that we would *have to kneel* as he passed by. This I would not do. We concluded to go away, come again at the regular time, see him, and shake hands.

We expect to leave to-day for Pisa—thence to Florence and Venice, and then Switzerland. Victor Emanuel is doing large things for Italy, and if he is spared ten years and is wise, the Pope and his whole system of oppression, presumption, deception, and persecution will be mortally wounded. God bless Victor Emanuel and the cause of religious and political freedom in poor ignorant, superstitious Italy! The Pope's soldiers guard him at every point. We were challenged at three or four doors as we carried our letter of introduction from our Consul. A guard of eight or ten Swiss, in gay uniform of yellow, black and blue, stand outside the room where the Pope is. They present arms (lances) whenever a Cardinal or Bishop passes. The Pope's body servants are all dressed in rich, scarlet brocade—silk pants, stockings, and coats—with white cravats and buckled shoes. I yesterday asked a guide (in fun)

where the Pope *preached*? He looked at me as though he would annihilate me, and said, he *never* preaches—"He is only seen in public service two or three times a year!" We are all pretty well, but shall be glad to get out of hot, dirty and *flea*-cursed Italy. Poor Mamma has flea-bites from her sore toe to her neck. I am pretty well peppered—but as I don't *scratch* they soon heal up. Good-bye, you dear, dear boy. I feel more than ever how much I love you, and how deep, and constant is my interest in you. May God bless and keep you. Mamma sends love. Your dear PAPA.

SORRENTO, ITALY, July, 1871.

DEAR WILLIE: Here we are at a little village right across the bay from Naples. You must look the place out on the map. In sight is that great volcano, Mt. Vesuvius, and last night before going to bed I went out and looked at it. The evening was clear and beautiful, and the stars were looking out from the blue sky as though they did not care how much old Vesuvius fired up—*they* were safe. The red hot lava, like a little mountain stream, was pouring down from the barren, ugly crater—like a mad giant with red hot melted iron running out of one corner of his mouth. To-morrow we may try to get up to Vesuvius and see it, but the ashes are so deep all over the sides of the mountain that it is pretty hot, hard work to climb up during these warm days. Mamma says she will not attempt it. When the travelers get up to a place called "the hermitage," they get off their donkeys and have to climb. But there are always men who will carry you up. But it costs twenty-five francs, or five dollars, and I hardly feel like giving that to be carried one hundred and fifty feet or so.

The great excitement with us all now is, that we all have lots of—fleas. First one bites mamma on the arm; then on her foot; then behind her ear, then on her back and limbs, and I laugh to see her scratching first one place and then another; and while I laugh at her, six of them bite *me* all at once.

Sorrento is beautifully situated on the Bay of Naples, and we found it as cool as anywhere on the sea shore near Boston in July. \* \* \* I hope you are a noble, good boy—not only kind and obedient to dear Grandma, but gentle toward all the boys, returning good for evil, not being selfish, always trying to be like Jesus who loved even His enemies. Try and love Him with all your heart, then what a joyful thing it will be when we come to die and are called up to Heaven!

Your dear PAPA.

\* \* \* The girls and boys here all have olive-colored skin and jet black hair and eyes. Very few have shoes or stockings; in fact most of the men and women are bare-footed. If a boy gets tired and sleepy, instead of going home, he lies down on the pavement or in the dirt and has a royal good time. It makes a body's heart ache to see how these poor children are growing up in ignorance and misery. And yet they seem quite cheerful and happy. The fact is, *our* land is a favored one indeed, *our* children are highly favored, and it is a matter for which all of us should be grateful to God. Much more will be expected of us, than of these unfortunate people.

The donkeys are an institution every where, but the tiniest little fellows are those we saw in Naples. They are not much bigger than dogs. You will sometimes see quite a big bunch of vegetables moving along the streets, and upon examining it carefully you will find the

tail of a donkey hanging down behind. They use the tail to steer by. When the driver wants the donkey to go to the right, he pulls the animal by its tail over toward the left, and round swings the donkey and his load. I often wish I could bring one of them home. Some are really beautiful in their homeliness. Their owners frequently adorn their heads with ribbons and flowers and little looking-glasses. In Naples we saw milkmen serving milk, and how do you think it was done? Why they use goats instead of cows, and then instead of milking them at home and sending the milk to the customer they drive the goats to the doors and milk what is wanted. It looks funny to see a big fellow driving four nice-looking goats along, and funnier still to see how each one has her own set of customers, and stops at just such doors; goes up two or three pairs of stairs in tenement houses, and stands waiting on the landing for the owner to come and milk her. \* \* \* And now, good-bye, dear child. Be good children, and when at night you kneel to pray, you must ask God for Jesus' sake to forgive and care for you, and take good care of us as we journey so far away from home and those we love.

Your dear loving PAPA.

## CHAPTER XV.

### RETURN TO BOSTON.

We returned to Boston in October, 1871. I need not say how cordially we were greeted, nor how vigorously and earnestly Mr. Dickerson, renovated in health, re-entered on his pastoral and pulpit labors. From this time until November, 1873, he enjoyed almost uninterrupted health, and gave himself to every form of good work. He had indeed his occasional infirmities, as allusions in the following letters, which were written during this interval, will show.

From a letter written to his daughter in 1873, from Boston :

MY DEAR DAUGHTER : It is almost supper-time;—the house is as quiet as a church. I am alone in the study, and only Mary's voice breaks the stillness as she occasionally begins one of her peculiar songs. Spencer has not as yet come home; Willie is out distributing "prohibition" ballots with my name on for "School Committee;" Mamma is at Music Hall, where the grand Fair is to be inaugurated to-night. "Rove" has just at this moment returned, heralding I suppose the homeward tendency of Will; and is now raising his "let-me-in" bark at the back door. We are all wagging on in the



usual way. My eye has troubled me a good deal, and on Sunday my sermons were thought out rather than planned out with pen. I can scarcely read by gaslight, and I "see double" when I do—which is not the thing for a prohibition candidate for School Com-



SOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH,  
BOSTON, MASS.

mittee. \* \* \* I send you one of the tickets which the prohibition party has issued, and which will be voted to-morrow. Our ward polls about 500 or 600 votes, and of these I am pretty sure to get about 90 or 100. So all I need now is about 510 votes to elect me. Let our relations all know that I am thus honored

and tell them of the brilliant prospects ahead. We think of having a balcony built out over the front door, so that I can receive delegations, serenades, etc. Tell our relatives our plans. Good-bye, you dear child. Do not forget us, and do not forget the blessed Hand that leads and guides and blesses us—or we go unblest. Give love to Uncle Sam, Auntie Grace, and all the little folks, from us all. I dare say you will have lots of fun with Carrie, for she is a darling little toad.

Affectionately, your dear father,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

A few weeks later to the same :

I am a good deal better of my rheumatism, but have a terribly painful boil, brought out by using so many compresses, etc., on my back. I preached Sabbath morning and led a large and good prayer-meeting in the evening. Some arose for prayers, and several are awaiting baptism.

TO HIS WIFE.

NEW YORK, April 10, 1873.

I have just read your last dear letter, and will take the present time to answer it, though it may render the note a brief one. I have just left Dr. Fulton, who gives me the last intelligence of home and the dear ones that make it *the* spot of all others the dearest on earth. I do not wonder that men and women make short cuts to "the dogs"—when they have no home, or when home is *not* home. I think no man is beyond reach who still feels the influence of some home power. \* \* \* As you said nothing of the sick ones in the church, I trust they are all getting along. Hanson Place Church would like to have Fulton come on and

start a sort of Tremont Temple affair in Brooklyn. He seems somewhat inclined to come. They say that Lorimer will come here too. Several have been talking to me about changing, with a better salary, etc. But unless my health should demand it I do not feel at all disposed to leave my present field or church. When I look back I can not praise gratefully enough that surprising grace and care of the blessed Saviour in leading such a poor, wicked, and homeless orphan by a way so mysterious to honors and success so undeserved and—by every body—so unexpected. There is no church so small or so unimportant that I should not have felt—twenty-five years ago—to be a splendid field, and a gratification to my highest ambition. If I can only with true simplicity of heart and true devotion to Christ keep serving Him where He wants me to be, it will be a great thing for me when life's confines shall have been reached, and life's work done.

I am glad cousin Lulu is with you. Don't work that sewing machine again until I get home. When that back breaks I want to be around to save the various, precious fragments. *Take it easy.* I would much rather pay a sewing girl, and it would be to your comfort and economy in every respect. Kiss the children for me. Remember me to "Rove" and tell him to see to things a little. God bless you. I send you a little flower.

In November, 1873, Mr. Dickerson took a severe cold, and was prostrated by a painful rheumatic fever, which confined him for several weeks to the house. He was soon, however, out again and laboring beyond his strength. Meetings were being held, many were inquiring after the way of salvation;

and Mr. Dickerson, with but partially recovered strength, and feeling some recurring twinges of his former trouble, yet could not but yield himself with all his powers to the exigency. By day he visited amidst snow and mud those who needed counsel and encouragement, and was out nearly every evening till a late hour in the public meetings. He was remonstrated with by his brethren, who begged him to remain at home on the stormy nights—but in vain. His heart was in the meetings, and he would drag thither his body until his strength was well nigh spent.

In February our little Gracie was born, and as soon as I was able to go out, I accompanied him to the meetings, often when I felt scarcely strength to do so, for the purpose of forcing him away from the church in which he would otherwise stay talking with the anxious and inquiring too late into the night. His throat too troubled him and it hurt him to sing. But the singing dragged if he did not lead it, and the temptation to do so was too strong for him to resist. He would sometimes promise me, when starting for the service that, this time, for his throat's sake he would refrain; but when on his return I said to him, "I suppose you kept your promise," he would reply, "I sang every time and I couldn't help it."

But this will-power at length failed him. One stormy afternoon he had been out until six o'clock making visits, and came in looking pale and haggard. He ate his supper, and then went up stairs and threw himself on the bed, saying, "I will rest a few



minutes before going to meeting.' He looked so sick that I begged him not to go, but yield the care of the meeting to others. He at first insisted on going to look after the converts and inquirers, but at last yielded to my importunities, and as I proposed to write a note to one of the Deacons he said, "Well, send him word; I suppose I ought to stay." As he undressed and got into bed he remarked, "Yes, darling, you were right. *I am sick*, and ought not to have been out this afternoon." The next morning he was in a high fever, which was followed by a second attack of rheumatism. He did not leave the house for seven weeks, or enter his pulpit again for three months. His people were all kindness and attention, manifesting the tenderest sympathy over his illness, and assuring him by formal committees that they would freely give him six months for recovery, and relieve him from every need of anxiety about the church.

As soon as he was able to go out he went to New York, and spent a few weeks. I quote from a few letters written during this visit.

STATEN ISLAND, May, 1874.

MY DEAR EMMA: You are getting ahead of me in the matter of letters, and I shall have to keep at it, or fall to the rear. It has been a great satisfaction to hear so often and have such favorable tidings from home. I do feel grateful to God for all the past, and for the auspicious outlook of our home affairs. More and more I am convinced that we are favored far beyond the average of families. My home is happier, my dear darling wife is sweeter, and my children are better, and better



behaved, than any I find in my travels. And I very freely acknowledge how much we owe to the loving efficiency of "dear Mamma." Although I am getting along very comfortably, I shall indeed be glad when I can properly and safely turn my footsteps toward home. \* \* \* I am looking forward to home and to Campton with almost childish longings!

From another written the same week from Dr. Fulton's in Brooklyn, we quote a few sentences: "The great Jubilee at Hanson Place came off last night, and was indeed a perfect success. It showed that a man or a church can afford to be talked against and defamed—when standing for the truth. The solid men in the ministry of our church, as well as some of our more prominent laymen were on the platform to endorse brother Fulton as one whom we honored for his fearless and outspoken defense of Baptist principles. \* \* \* I was fairly obliged to make a short speech about half-past ten o'clock. I got to bed about half-past eleven o'clock, but did not sleep until daylight. Still I feel pretty well, and as the weather was rainy or cloudy yesterday, I am grateful that I am so well this morning. If I can only get back a strong voice once more—and I am quite hopeful—I think I am good for considerable service yet, but perhaps not in rigorous New England. Several friends have been talking to me about churches in which they are interested, and Mr. Goodman, of the *Chicago Standard*, wants to talk with me about an interest with him.

"But, it may be, God has a work for me to do right where He has placed me, and it is far the wiser

way to await His unfolded will. I am ready to do it—that will be the happiest as well as the most profitable path which is marked out by Him.

“Next week I shall spend in a more business-like way and see a number of friends, then get ready to go home, the best and the happiest part of the plan.

\* \* \* I am glad all things are passing pleasantly there. Let us be grateful! Give love to all. My home is more and more to me every time I go away. But Dr. Fulton is coming to take me out driving, so good-bye.”

NEW YORK, May 29, 1874.

MY DEAR WIFE: I spent Wednesday night and all Thursday at Staten Island, brother Sam, and Grace and little Carrie going along. We had a very pleasant time, and I am expecting to spend two or three days with them next week. The place is in its most beautiful and fragrant spring attire. —’s baby is simply a bouncer—nine months old, and weighs twenty-three or twenty-four pounds. Its name is Harriet, but it ought to be called Harry, for it looks like a boy, and I keep saying “he” and “him” all the time. Mary looks tired out, and I thought if she could have a rest from the continual din and worry of her nursery work, it would be a coveted blessing. These devoted mothers—dear souls, have their hands full. I was very glad to get your letter when I returned from Staten Island; in fact, I was thinking about it all that day. It is good to hear from the dear ones at home, and to think of them as so full of goodness and love, you long to clasp them in your arms. What a poor world this would be were it not for *love*, and the hearts and homes which it irradiates and makes joyous.

I am gaining in flesh and in strength. My appetite is fair, and I am slowly getting back to my old average. My throat is less improved, but I think, better. \* \* \* Give love to all and kisses freely, beginning with little Grace, and keeping a beautiful selection for your dear self from a loving and appreciative husband. \* \* \*

After spending a Sabbath at the same place he wrote again Monday morning: "It rained hard all night, but it is bright and clear to-day; still, fearing the dampness I stay in-doors. Leonard and Mary went to church in the morning, but I was at home all day. I read, and walked, and thought of you. A spring Sabbath in the country is a very enjoyable and profitable season. I could not help thinking of my church and people, and longed for the time when I could preach again, and see the work of the Lord prosperously advancing. It seems a terribly long time since I left home; I can hardly realize that it is less than two weeks. I shall be glad to turn my footsteps homeward.

"This is the first of June! The Summer is here, and before we fully realize it, it will be gone. I am hoping for much improvement in my general health from our quiet stay in Campton. I think my visit here is as good for me as anything could be. They are all very kind and allow me to do just as I please. \* \* \* About the swimming, tell Will he had better wait until Spencer or Ubert or some older person can go with him. When I return I will give him chances enough. I think I am a model husband in the way of letter-writing." \* \* \*

Another, written a few days later, still shows his hopeful spirit, and his longing to be at work again, although he was utterly unfitted for it. He writes: "The rain to-day disarranges all my plans—but it's all right. If I can not get to Dr. Fulton's to-night, I shall be on the safe side, and will go when it clears. I feel quite like myself again—all but this little troublesome bronchial hack. I think Dr. Thayer or Dr. Cullis could relieve that, now that I am stronger. Perhaps it would be well to announce next Sunday that I expect to be present the following Sabbath, and perhaps preach a part of the day. I can walk almost as well as ever. I sleep fairly; but I must take things very easy for some time to come. *Rest*, however, I am quite confident will bring me all right in time, for I think there is really no settled disease about me. The good Lord will bring it all right I am sure. You can not long to have me back any more intensely than I desire to get back; and but for the feeling that I had better not, I should have turned up at home by this time."

Soon after Mr. Dickerson's return from New York, we all went to Campton, N. H. We spent seven weeks in that beautiful region delightfully and healthfully. Yet during all this time he was slowly growing worse. The rheumatism seemed to have settled in his left knee, which was very much inflamed, and failed to grow better in spite of all our remedies. Still, amidst the thronging guests of the house there was none livelier, happier or more entertaining than my husband. He was at all times full of hope, and indulged often the belief that he



was really better and might yet anticipate another good year's work in Boston. The Autumn, however, found him more lame, his throat more troublesome, and "this little bronchial hack" mentioned in one of his letters, becoming painfully noticeable. In November it became evident to him that he must resign his place and for a while relinquish preaching. His knee had become so inflamed that it was with difficulty that he could walk the short distance from his house to his church, and although the carriages of his friends were at his disposal for this purpose and for pastoral visiting, yet of course it was out of the question to carry forward in this way the pastoral care of a large church. His throat too was so weak that he was often obliged to procure a supply for the pulpit, and alike to his own sorrow and that of a people devotedly attached to him, it became manifest that his labors with them must cease. The struggle within his own heart of surrendering his cherished life-work, can be known only by those who have had the like experience.

In this emergency the providence of God opened to him a field of action, the next in interest and importance to that which he was quitting, and all the more welcome, as it was precisely that in which he had already had many years of happy experience. In New York he had been for four years associated with Dr. M. B. Anderson in the management of the *New York Recorder*; in Philadelphia he had had for years the care of the *Chronicle*, and thus large portions of his mature life had been given to religious journalism. A similar opening now invited his footsteps



to the great and rising metropolis of the West. Mr. Goodman, one of the proprietors of the *Standard*, in Chicago, had corresponded with Mr. Dickerson in regard to purchasing half the paper which his partner, Mr. Leroy Church, wished to sell. Mr. Dickerson had, however, not seriously entertained the question, hoping that even if unable to bear the rigors of a New England climate, he might continue the work if he lived in a more genial region. He had written, therefore, to Mr. Goodman to "count him out" and seek another purchaser. The latter, however, declined to follow his advice, but cherished the hope of yet having him as his associate in Chicago. And just about this time, early in November, when Mr. Dickerson was coming to the slow and reluctant conclusion that he must for a time be utterly debarred from pastoral labor, he received another pressing letter on the subject from Mr. Goodman. The result was that, late in November Mr. Dickerson went out to Chicago, to look over the property and determine his course of duty. It began to look like a marked and gracious Providence that was opening to him a path of Christian usefulness with hand and brain while resting his throat and limb. He felt, too, naturally drawn to a sphere of labor with which were linked so many delightful associations of the past. From Chicago he wrote the following letter to his son :

CHICAGO, Dec. 4, 1874.

MY DEAR WILLIE : I was quite surprised to hear of the arrival of the "measles." I knew them well some years ago. It is a good thing to have them early. But

you must be very careful not to expose yourself for some time after you *feel* well. The disease weakens for awhile all our internal organism—the mucus membrane—the ceretras organs—the cesophagus, the alimentary canal—and the entire nervitine salitudes, duodenums, etc., are all more or less involved, and you see how it is. (Willie was studying physiology at this time, and talked a great deal about the functions of various parts of the body, etc.) One chill within a week after you are pretty well, might give you a permanent weakness. So you must be patient and careful.

I have just this moment had a telegram from dear Mamma that you are getting on nicely. Thank the dear Saviour for your improvement. I hope He will care for you, and that you will *love* Him. He is my only reliance. When trouble, sickness, age, death come on, then I think of my hope in Him. It never fails. Do yield yourself—your love—your will to Jesus. That is all; that is being a Christian. Then we never can be separated even by death; “we still are joined in heart, and hope to meet again.” What a blessed thing it would be for Lulu and you and Cliff and Ed. to become Christians! I think if you led the way it might be so! Perhaps by your not leading, they may never get to Heaven, even if you should yet reach that happy place. Christians are happy; christians are in the line of duty; christians are safe. May God incline your heart to decide now.

I am working away to see what will come of this *Standard* matter. It looks as though we might yet live in Chicago, and I think we might be very happy out here. Loring Cheney is in the Sophomore class of the University, here. \* \* \* Hoping you are getting

toward convalescence, and will be careful, and with much love to dear Mamma, Spencer, Lulu and Gracie,  
I am,

Affectionately your father,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

The result of this and a subsequent visit was the purchase of a half interest in the *Standard* on the first of January, 1875, and our removal to Chicago in the middle of the February following.

The leaving Boston was made by some special circumstances peculiarly trying. Mr. Dickerson could rejoice, indeed, that he was leaving his people in the midst of a refreshing revival, yet it was a heavy trial that he could attend few of their meetings, could lead none of the converts down into the baptismal waters, and take scarcely any share in the public labors in which his soul delighted. As quietly and patiently as might be he had to nurse his infirmities at home, and rejoice that the gracious Master could carry on the work without him. He *did* rejoice and kept his spirit, in helpless but loving confidence.

Finally, one effort must be made. The farewell—the “word which must be and hath been” must be uttered. On a Sabbath on which Rev. Dr. Gardner preached for him, Mr. Dickerson was taken to the church, walked tremblingly to the pulpit, and leaning over it, said to his people a few words of farewell. He was too weak to trust himself to any utterance of the tender emotions, to any dwelling upon the tender memories which the occasion inspired and which came crowding upon his heart. He could scarcely venture beyond the commonplaces of

pastoral exhortation, in urging them to keep up their prayer-meetings, fill their places on the Sabbath, even when their leader was gone, and work on courageously under the assurance that the Lord would in due time supply their need. He thanked them for their great kindness to him, spoke for a few minutes of his plans and hopes, asked a continuance of their prayers for him—prayers, “not sad and despairing, but hopeful,” and with tearful smiles bade them good-bye. There was no dry eye in the house. The congregation understood the struggle which was masked by the calm cheerfulness of his manner, and if they did not “fall on his neck and kiss him,” they sorrowed deeply in their hearts with the thought that they should probably hear his voice and “see his face no more.” And their apprehensions were realized. Soon after leaving them he was a hopeless invalid, and in about a year had become a resident of the better but unseen land.

Mr. Dickerson felt that, perhaps, his best work was done in Boston. When he entered upon his labors there, in the spring of 1870, the church was burdened with a debt of over twenty-six thousand dollars, and it was only with a struggle that they could pay the interest on this, and at the same time meet their current expenses. The Lord blessed his ministry so abundantly, and the church was so thoroughly united in him, that, at the close of the first year, not only had the congregation constantly increased, but by the accession of new members the church was strengthened, both spiritually and financially; the increased expenses were easily met, and



something was done toward liquidating the debt. While this result commanded the warmest gratitude to God for so large a blessing, the many tokens of love, on the part of his people, their confidence, sympathy, and active support, the numerous and cordial expressions of appreciation, kindled a like grateful feeling toward those whom he served, and made his pastorate in Boston a continual joy.

The change of the preaching service from the afternoon so increased the attendance that Mr. Dickerson was soon preaching to the largest Baptist congregation in Boston, with a single exception—that of Tremont Temple. Few were aware of the sense of responsibility which weighed upon his heart, as he tried to preach Christ to these audiences of a thousand immortal souls. His heart was fully in the work, and it was often remarked by his people, as they left one of these solemn and inspiring services: “It seems like coming from a heavenly atmosphere down to an earthly one again.” When, in our conversation, as we walked homeward, I spoke in praise of the sermon, his reply would be—and I now vividly recall the look and the expression: “Did I make the points clear, and do you think it will do good?” He preached, “not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord.” He sought, not praises, but souls. At the close of his first year, nearly seventy had been added to the church, and at almost every communion he had the joyful privilege of welcoming the newly baptized.

From the time of his return from Europe, with vigor renewed, until he was obliged to give up his



cherished work, in 1875, the membership continued to increase, and the church steadily prospered. The Sabbath-school, with its corps of earnest, intelligent teachers, and its devoted superintendents, had grown largely in numbers and in influence. The prayer-meetings were invariably a feast to those who attended them—young and old—while the voices of inquirers and young converts were often heard there. The ladies' circles and sociables were quoted everywhere as models of their kind; and the debt, a large one for such a church, was all subscribed before Mr. Dickerson left, and completely extinguished in a short time after his removal to Chicago. Meantime, other claims were not forgotten. The missionary enterprises of the denomination, the temperance cause, every form of public interest, with the claims of Christian benevolence, commanded his active support and that of his church. Even while the process of paying the debt went forward, the contributions of the church to various objects were larger in amount than ever before.

Mr. Dickerson often preached in the pulpits of his Congregational and Methodist brethren, while at the social reunions, and in all gatherings of Baptists, no one was welcomed more cordially or heard more gladly than he. I am confident that all hearts responded to the words of Dr. Lorimer, at the memorial services held in the church at South Boston, after his death, when he said: "What Dr. Dickerson was to you, your sorrow witnesses; what he was to the denomination in this vicinity, can never be truly estimated."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CHICAGO.

Our removal to Chicago was in February, 1875. The city had sprung up Phœnix-like from the ashes of its great conflagration, and was shining in its superb beauty, an exemplification beyond any other American city, of the energetic and indomitable character of American enterprise. The *Standard* which, like every other interest, had seemed temporarily overwhelmed by the great ocean of flame that had swept over the city, had partially recovered, and was starting under favorable auspices on its new course. Mr. Dickerson's reception here was most cordial and fraternal. Congratulatory letters came to him from all quarters, and the Baptists of the Northwest, friends of the paper, felt new hope and encouragement for all their enterprises in the coming of one so widely known as a loyal Baptist, an efficient and wide-awake editor, and an equally earnest and judicious supporter of every good cause. Mr. Goodman, his partner, gave us, a few days after our arrival, a most delightful reception at the Brevoort House, where we were stopping. Nearly one hundred and fifty representative Baptists were present, and Mr. Dickerson received his public and formal introduction to the friends and brethren

with whom he was to be associated. He was scarcely able to be present, and many remarked how ill he looked. Yet he spoke with animation, and returned their greetings with all his accustomed geniality. The occasion, however, over, as we retired to our apartments he dropped exhausted into his chair, saying "*I am* sick, and have hardly the strength and life to go to bed." But the next morning he was up, started cheerfully forth for his work, and with buoyant spirit but halting step, made his way over the icy pavements to the office. By those who had been familiar with the rapid and eager tread of former years he would scarcely be recognized in his slow and careful steps, and feeble look. For about three weeks he forced his way to the office through the wind and sleet and rain of severe March weather. He spoke at Social Unions, and attended various public gatherings, declaring that he was "not going to act sick any more," and trusting that he should soon be better.

A letter written to his sister (Mrs. Van Dusen) at this time will show his condition better than I can describe it.

CHICAGO, March 15, 1875.

DEAR GRACE: All the family are at church save Gracie and myself. A bad grip of the rheumatism on my well side has doubled me right up, and I am crawling around like a lobster. I get so discouraged at times that I want to get away from everybody and just bawl for an hour. I am hoping that the warm weather will be helpful for me every way. My bad knee is rather better I think — though there is no great change. For a few days my

bronchitis has been worse, and I have been threatened with pneumonia. I coughed badly in the morning; could not lie on my right side for the lung was too sensitive; and could not lie long on my left, or my heart would begin to thump. I was away from the office from Monday until Friday. But I am better of all this—it probably came from a cold which went the usual way with me, beginning with slight catarrhal symptoms and then working down to my bronchia. As I think of my feeble condition for the past months I can only look upon my preservation from a terrible sickness as of God's special mercy. I only fear that I stood at my post as a preacher of the gospel too long. If I did, it was with the best of motives, and if in this life, I feel its disadvantages—in *the next*, I shall have the reward. So it's all right.

I am happy about it. Should it be necessary for me to go to a more genial clime, it's a great comfort to know that Colorado, "the invalid's Paradise," is but a two days' ride from here. But I am quite hopeful of a decided improvement. I am doing just what work I can do easily—going to the office when I please, staying as long as I feel like it. I can do easily and without much mental outlay what is needed on the *Standard*—i. e., short, spicy, editorial paragraphs—remarks in brief about religious and secular things, etc., etc. My partner is as careful to have me save myself as Emma is, frequently advising me to remain at home and work if the weather is unfavorable. So the dear Lord has made a place for me wonderfully adapted to all my weaknesses, and yet utilizing all my strength. I praise Him continually.

Thus far our business matters have been quite encouraging. \* \* \* I know that a minister of the Gospel, broken in the service at my age, must not expect much besides a bare living—he is favored if he gets that.



Ministers in their prime are favored indeed;—ministers used up, have a sad, hard life. \* \* \* Emma, dear soul, has her hands full, taking care of a little well baby, and a big sick one. Still she shows no sign of giving up, and never looked better. We have much attention shown us, and find many old friends to greet us. Emma has just come in and sends love to you, and uncle Sam, and the children, in which I cordially join. The Lord bless you all.

Your brother, JAMES.

I scarcely need say how happy were Mr. Dickerson's relations with his new associates. His business partner, Mr. Goodman, speedily won from him that cordial love and respect which his excellent Christian character, genial manners, and great business capacity could not fail to command from the entire Christian public. His associate editor, was Dr. J. A. Smith, who for nearly a quarter of a century had the editorial conduct of the paper, and by his uniformly sound and correct judgment, by the breadth and justness of his views, and the blended firmness and moderation with which he maintained them, had brought the *Standard* into the very front rank of religious journalism, and fairly secured to himself the title of "the Model Editor." Associated with such men, so thoroughly congenial in spirit and temper, he began his labors under the happiest auspices—happiest, except as darkened by the one cloud of physical infirmity which was now sternly gathering over his prospects, and which refused to be dispelled even by his strong will and buoyant hopefulness. Equableness of spirit, serenity of temper, hoping trustfulness, a resolution that



risers above weakness and quails at no obstacles, may push far into the future the day of final physical discomfiture. But it will come at last. Decay is inwrought into our nature; and however we may postpone, we can not finally avert it. Mr. Dickerson became at last obliged to confine himself to the house and send for a physician. "My wife," said he, "thought I had better see you, Doctor. But there is nothing much the matter with me. I am just a little worn down and overworked, but I shall come out all right." But it was the beginning of a third attack of rheumatic fever, and he was not dressed again for nearly a month, nor indeed until the night in which we started for a journey of seven hundred miles to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Some serious obstacles to our going thither were removed by the interposition of generous friends. Dr. and Mrs. Cheney kindly offered to take two of the children to their house and care for them during our absence; while my sister, Mrs. Barton, living in the city, made the same generous offer for the little one year old baby and her nurse. Three little babies, one after another, we had laid away forever, and now we parted in sadness from the elder children, but sorely apprehensive that from the delicate little nürseling our parting was final. Mr. Dickerson was unable to stand, and at every change had to be lifted to and from the cars. Sick as he was, yet on the railway, with the aid of the sleeping cars, he was tolerably comfortable. The railroad route, however, came to an end, and the last thirty miles of the journey had to be traversed over roads whose rough-

ness and wildness could scarcely have been looked for even in the interior of Arkansas. At four o'clock on a raw cold morning, having sought in vain for any palatable food, we set off in a dilapidated, springless hack, and jolting over rocks and trunks of trees, fording streams, plunging through "sloughs of despond" and despair, over a road of which not one quarter of a mile was smooth, we made our comfortless and often perilous way to our place of destination. To Mr. Dickerson the journey was a continuous torture. Using his hands as springs to keep his body from the hard unyielding seat, until his wrists seemed ready to break, and yet tossing violently with the movements of the huge vehicle, he rode for thirty miles in an agony which only the utmost heroism could endure. No wonder that when we reached the huge barn-like building which bore the mocking title of the *Grand Central Hotel*, and he was lifted from the wagon, the people who gathered round supposed that he had come there just to die. Their faces and their manner told their conviction that I was ministering to a dying husband.

Still life was strong within him, and from an ordeal that might have seemed to threaten even a stronger man, he rallied. We remained there two months, and he in every way grew better. He could walk with crutches, had more appetite, rode out a little, and finally returned to Chicago considerably encouraged, though disappointed as to the thorough curative efficacy of the medicinal waters. To some friends who bade him good-bye as he started for the Springs, he had said, "I shall come back soon and skip up

the stairs three steps at a time." He shrunk now from meeting them when with difficulty he walked on crutches. In truth the fountains of life were sapped, and the mineral waters could not resupply them. They could mitigate symptoms, could give some of the outward showings of health, but left the cause and hidden virus of his disease unreached.

We spent the following Summer in Highland Park, a beautiful suburban town, built on a bluff, seventy feet above the lake. The place was delightful, but the Summer was a sad one to us all. Mr. Dickerson's knee grew more and more inflamed, and more and more painful until it was torture to be moved. He had to submit to some severe operations, and suffered so excruciatingly that morphia alone could give him cessation from pain or rest in sleep.

From a letter written from that place to his uncle James Stokes, after several eminent surgeons had seen him and deemed it probable that, in order to live, he must suffer the amputation of that limb, we quote some sentences :

HIGHLAND PARK, Aug. 24, 1875.

MY DEAR UNCLE: This is the first day since I received your letter that I have been able to write ; now it is under many difficulties, as I am bolstered up in bed with pillows at my back, my knee and my feet. I ache in every muscle from my waist downward. Still I call myself "quite comfortable"—whenever I am not thrilled through and through with tormenting pains. I have suffered somewhat less since my leg was lanced, and discharged so much blood and matter. \* \* \* My doctors, both allopaths and homeopaths, agree that the great thing to be done is to increase my general health.

They say, "Improve your appetite, be out in the open air, and build up your general health." This is rather cheap advice to a poor, weak soul on crutches, who can not move without a pang, and can not eat or sleep with any satisfaction. In regard to an amputation—while all have told me that it was possible to happen, no one has said that it was at all certain. The nearest they came to it was to say that amputation would save me a world of suffering, and could be more safely endured now than at any future time. But they did not advise it positively. As the leg belonged to me, I quietly concluded I would try many expedients before I would give it up, and my family doctor is working on that plan. The case is not one for medicine, but for general treatment. Thank Cousin James for his interest in the matter, and for the kind letters and information he has sent me.

But I must stop. Give love to all the dear ones at Madison Avenue, not forgetting Dora and the baby. Pray for us all—we greatly need it. I fear sometimes that Emma will break down under her cares and troubles, which never stop, day or night. I know prayer *has been* answered in my behalf in the weary painful watches of the night, when I was so exhausted and bewildered with suffering that I could only plead His promise, "Come—and *I will* give you rest." From every direction I get letters of sympathy, and the tidings come that my friends all over the land, in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Wilmington, and Pittsburgh, are remembering me in prayer. I expect to come out of this great distress! But how glorious the thought that even dying is a victory in my case, wrought out through the blessed Saviour! He is my Friend, and has been ever since He forgave me my sins, and took me, a poor orphan boy in the Bowery, and put His Holy Spirit into my heart. I love to



preach His gospel, and am glad that my best strength has been thus spent, and that His blessed smile has covered so much of my poor efforts. How I would love to preach again this sweet gospel of the grace of God! But it is all right with me, whatever happens. All things work together, etc., etc. Dear Emma sends her love.

Your grateful but suffering nephew,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

During these months of suffering Mr. Dickerson was generally hopeful, and kept himself readily open to every available source of enjoyment. He rode occasionally in an easy carriage; enjoyed constantly the open air while sitting well wrapped and reading the papers on the porch; while often bolstered up in chair or bed, he would write for the *Standard*. His head was clear and free from pain, for which he often expressed gratitude; he read much, was always entertaining, and vivacious in conversation. During this time he was up and dressed a part of the day; would walk up and down the parlors on his crutches, and cheer his friends with the playful assurance that he should disappoint the doctors and was not going to die. But in August his knee became much worse; he was weak and wasted, and suffered incessantly; and the physicians and surgeons who visited him from Chicago, talked more of an amputation which they began to think inevitable. Early in September we came to our house in Chicago, and Mr. Dickerson was carried in a chair from the carriage into the house which he never left until his last remove from any earthly dwelling.

His sufferings during the next month were intense,



but scarcely suspected by those occasional visitors from whom his cheerful manner effectually disguised them. The slightest moving of his leg became torture, and at length physicians and surgeons alike agreed that the only hope of prolonging his life lay in amputating the limb, while all were quite confident that this would lead to a permanent recovery. His mind made up to submit to the operation, he said to the doctor, "Now that I have come to the conclusion, the sooner it is off the better; I should be glad to have it done to-day."

The "day" speedily came, and on the seventh of October the sad operation was accomplished. Memory dwells upon every step of the agonizing scene, but we spare the reader the painful details. Through all the preparations he lay on the bed peaceful and apparently happy. He talked with the physician who sat beside him, with smiles on his face, and when I came with streaming eyes—for I could not remain in the room—he said, "This is not the time to cry, darling. I expect soon to be more free from pain than I have been for weeks." But to sit in an adjoining room, following with ear and imagination the successive stages of the process, was agony indescribable. Blessed fruit of modern science, that the most deeply interested was the least conscious sufferer! "Is my leg off? How strange that I did not know it!" were among the exclamations with which he greeted my return to his bedside.

The first few weeks following the operation were days of sorrow and anxiety. He lay in a darkened room, scarcely seeing the family, while through

day and night we watched his slow recovery from so terrible a shock. His acute suffering was less than before the amputation, except during the dressing, and sometimes the agonizing probing, of his limb; but he suffered from intense prostration, profuse sweating, resulting from the taking of the ether, and in various other ways. He would lie for hours almost utterly silent and so nervously depressed that he could endure the presence of no persons in his room except his physicians and myself.

The news of his sufferings was met by almost universal sympathy, and letters of tender interest came from almost every quarter, which, so soon as he was able to read them, awoke constantly the deepest gratitude. Those, especially of his sister Mrs. Van Dusen, with their affectionate sisterly interest, were to him as a healing balm. From an assemblage of his ministering brethren with whom he had been associated in Boston came the following expression of sympathy:

BOSTON, Oct. 25, 1875.

REV. J. S. DICKERSON, D. D.—*Dear Brother:* At the meeting of the Baptist ministers of Boston this morning, on motion of Rev. Dr. Lorimer a resolution of sympathy with you in your present trial, and of affectionate remembrance in our prayers, was passed by a rising and unanimous vote.

Hoping the Lord will speedily restore you to serve Him in your new field of labor with that acceptance which endeared you to all hearts in this vicinity, we remain,

Yours as ever,

THE BAPTIST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF BOSTON.

For the Conference.

H. F. BARNES, Clerk.

One letter in particular, received about this time, was cordially welcomed. It came from one who had never seen him, but who, having in the service of his country made a similar surrender of one of his limbs, could thoroughly appreciate the bereavement which he had experienced, and could give both the sympathy of a kindly and Christian heart, and the practical suggestions and consolations of one who had gone through the like terrible ordeal. With its sympathetic, yet hopeful and cheering tone it came to him amidst the sad weeks following the amputation, doubly welcome.

PORTLAND, MAINE, Oct. 27, 1875.

REV. J. S. DICKERSON, D.D.—*My dear Brother:* I am a stranger to you, but I must write you a few words. I see by the papers that you have been compelled to suffer the loss of a leg. I need not say that I sympathize with you deeply, since I have passed through the same experience, having lost my left leg, above the knee, at the battle of Chancellorsville.

But I do not write to condole with you, but to cheer you; to welcome you to the noble army of Monopeds. We are neither few, nor of small consequence. As good men as the sun shines on sport the wooden leg in every city of the land. We welcome another to our number. Don't get discouraged. I hope the Lord will spare your life and that you will live to appreciate how much art can do to help you. I have worn a wooden leg for eleven years; can stand as long, and walk as far, and do as much pastoral work as any other man. I find it no hindrance even in baptizing. To be sure I can't run to a fire, or chase a horse-car, but then I save proportionally in dignity.

May the Lord give you grace and patience in your trial, and health and strength for many years of good work to come.

Yours Fraternally,

JAMES McWHINNIE,

Pastor Free St. Bap. Ch.

Tears of joy and gratitude streamed down his face as he heard that letter; and it seemed to give him new courage. And for weeks after, when he was occasionally desponding he would say, "Well, read me McWhinnie's letter again; that always cheers me."

He asked me to reply to this letter, making various inquiries, which I did, and soon after he received the following:

PORTLAND, MAINE, Nov. 9, 1875.

DEAR BROTHER DICKERSON: I was very glad to hear from Mrs. Dickerson in answer to my previous letter, and to learn that you are improving so fast. If your health is restored with the healing of the limb, you will be one of the happiest men in Chicago. Your wife asks several questions which I will try to answer.

I was not so reduced in flesh as in vitality when I suffered the amputation of my leg. I had lain on the battle-field for nearly thirteen days exposed to some terrible weather, and having very little food. I was wounded in the legs, one of my knees being completely shattered. On being brought into our lines inflammation became excessive, and the leg was amputated about seven inches above the knee. I lay a long time in a doubtful condition, and the limb not healing, I had a large abscess form in it, which nearly cost me my life. After that it was found that necrosis of the femur had set in; and about six months from the amputation the



whole thigh bone was removed so far as the socket. New bone, however, was already forming, which at last became strong enough to use, and the leg healing, I procured a wooden leg just one year after the amputation. [Then he gives his experience as to the best kind of crutches, how they should be used, etc., and closes in this way]: Let me say that it requires courage to use a wooden leg as well as to lose the old one. At first it is painful, awkward, discouraging work. The first time I used mine, I was sorry the bullet had not gone through my head instead of my knee! I thought I must go back to my crutches for life. But I determined I would walk on the leg if it killed me. So I threw away one of my canes (I had been using two) and went at it. And very soon I conquered the thing, and received many compliments for my *superior walking*; and I had to compete with the whole hospital, where there were one hundred and fifty of the same sort! Courage and care at the first will make one a good walker; timidity and carelessness will make him a bungler at it all his life.

I do not know that I have answered all your questions *seriatim*; but if I can be of any assistance please command my services. Yours is a great affliction, but with health restored and a good artificial leg, you will find life has not lost so much as you thought. May the Lord bless and comfort you both!

Yours very truly,

J. McWHINNIE.

This letter affected Mr. Dickerson in many ways. It made him grateful that his suffering had been in comparison less protracted and intense, and that while suffering he had been at home and kindly cared for. It gave him hope and encouragement, and



diminished largely that terrible dread of the wooden leg which had constantly haunted him, but to which he had never given utterance until it was in so large a measure dissipated by these encouraging letters.

By the first of November we were rejoicing in his manifest improvement, and the atmosphere of the house seemed less dreary. The children, hitherto excluded, could come in and talk with their father, and little Gracie, nearly two years old, could wait round his bedside, share his dainties, and be delighted with the old-time stories, and with the assurance of "a good frolic with her one of these days." By the close of the month, the healing process was still farther advanced, and it was a glad day when, though obliged to be carried to the table, he could sit with us and enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner. It was indeed a dinner of thanksgiving, and tears were in all our eyes as he asked a tender blessing on the meal. The neatly arranged table, the flowers and the fruit that adorned it, the "Welcome" wrought in evergreens, and every little mark of care and love, brimmed his heart and eyes with overflowing gratitude.

The same apparent improvement continued through the month of December. He writes thus to his old Wilmington friend, Dr. William Aikman, then residing in Detroit:

DECEMBER 6, 1875.

REV. DR. AIKMAN. *My very dear brother:* You will excuse my pencil I know; for, bolstered up as I am, pen and ink would be very troublesome facilities.

Your kind letter has touched my heart, and awakened memories of the most tender kind. Yourself, your wife

and your dear children, as they were in the solemn and eventful days of the war, have been passing before me, and forms of my own loved ones blend with them—forms that have vanished to the peaceful skies.

I have indeed been terribly afflicted. A sufferer from rheumatic fever for nearly a year, and then laid aside with an inflamed knee for many months of terrible agony, I finally, when wasted to ninety pounds, submitted to the knife and the saw of the surgeon. On the 7th of October, the mysterious etherized cap was drawn over my face. As I knew in whom I trusted, I was calm as if sinking to a natural sleep! But oh! the fearful, desolate weeks of reaction, weakness and pain! I thank God they are behind me. Many a time have I sorrowed that I ever awoke from the surgeon's table. But I am now comparatively comfortable, and gaining slowly. I am so thin and sore that I fail to get sound, sweet sleep; otherwise I think I should soon be on crutches and about the house. How genuine your sympathy will be for me, I know full well. In the no distant future I see brighter skies.

But now I am tired out and will stop. Give my love to your dear wife and all the children.

My own family are well. We number just as we did in 1861—only darling Ada went home to the better life, and our baby Grace, nearly two years old, makes good the number. Mrs. Dickerson sends her love.

I am, as ever, your friend and brother,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

The following paragraphs are from a letter to his uncle, James Stokes, dated Dec. 20 :

\* \* \* I am getting on but very slowly. I am so wasted and my bones so sore that I can not sit or lie long in any one place. Hence I fail to get good sleep.

This is my great drawback now. I sit up for a while every day. My doctor comes now but twice a week, and says everything looks hopeful.

I think God has guided me in all my sad way, and I praise Him for His mercies. I hope to be on my crutches in a few days. We are all usually well. Emma begins to look as bright and cheery as ever. A month ago, I had to call her up fifteen or twenty times in the night;—now, only once or twice. I really think her strength was providentially increased to meet the terrible strain on her body, heart and mind. “As thy day, so shall thy strength be.” Blessed promise.

Give my love to Aunt Caroline and all the children. May God bless you all!

Affectionately, your nephew,

JAMES S. DICKERSON.

During all this period, many letters of tender sympathy were coming to him. His old Church in Boston, gladdened our Christmas hearth with a generous present, and our hearts with still more precious words of affectionate remembrance. From a large gathering of Boston Baptists, in his former house of worship, came by vote of the body a telegraphic message of greeting and sympathy, to which he gratefully responded.

Mr. Dickerson's improvement continued until the middle of January. About this time an abscess which had been gathering in his “little leg,” as we termed the amputated limb, broke; and from this point he began slowly—and for some weeks, quite imperceptibly—to decline. Even yet, however, we indulged no fear of a fatal termination of the disease, and my husband said to me one day, “We

have been through a long and hard year of trials—hard for me, hard for you. How thankful should we be that the worst is over ; that your husband is spared and the outlook so favorable !” During all this time he was cheerful, with an almost uninterrupted flow of his old-time spirits. Letters were read and written, stories were told, songs were sung, conversations passing “from grave to gay, from lively to severe,” were held alike with family and with friends, and if all did not go “merry as a marriage bell,” yet, at least, we none of us caught the muffled death-knell that was in the near distance. The anticipated wooden leg became naturally an object of speculation ; and since Mr. McWhinnie’s letter had so largely disarmed it of its terrors, he could allude to it not only without nervousness, but often in his characteristic style of playful banter. The knowledge that the dreaded wood, which was to replace the lost member, would be of so light weight (not more than three and a half pounds), had taken a much heavier weight from off his mind, and he looked forward to the time when thus refurnished he should again tread the paths of active duty. He could, like Hood, joke about his infirmities, illustrating the laughing face under which the most serious feeling will sometimes disguise itself. Hood’s grim joke of “too much mustard for the quantity of meat,” when his wife was laying a mustard plaster on his emaciated limb, might be paralleled by several similar playful allusions of Mr. Dickerson to his unfortunate member. I will mention but one. He was asked by one of the children, if he could move his

“little leg” without touching it (he had had for weeks no power over it, and we had had to lift and move it). “O yes,” he replied, uncovering it as he sat in his easy chair, and moving it up and down in a comical way,—“Speak for yourself, old fellow; be the *stump* orator of the occasion!”

But the playful glided insensibly and naturally into the serious. His humor rippled brightly and delicately over the deep stream of earnest thought and emotion. His prayers at family worship, as he sat in his chair, unable either to rise or to kneel, were full of devout aspirations; the breathings of a soul glowing with gratitude to the Lord for His mercies, and making such tender references to the dark weeks of suffering as often melted us to tears. He would sing with us until he began to cough, and then, after an interval of choking, would join in again with his clear, sweet voice. Such grand old hymns as, “The Star of Bethlehem,” “Rock of Ages,” “There is a Land of Pure Delight,” “Jesus, Thy name I love,” “Nearer my God to Thee,” were among those which he constantly called for, and never tired of hearing.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### HIS FINAL ILLNESS.

I had noticed through February that my husband was somewhat weaker, but as this was a natural consequence of the abscess, and as his appetite was good, I did not regard it as at all dangerous. He was in the meantime so hopeful, so much interested in all external and public matters, especially in all that concerned the paper and the church, with the interests of both of which he hoped confidently to be soon again actively connected, that all serious fears were kept in constant abeyance, and rarely broke in on the delusive dream of his recovery. From that dream, however, we were at length effectually aroused. In March, we observed that he sat up each day a shorter time than the day previous; he was less animated and became sooner weary, and by the middle of the month the physician's kindly uttered but dreadful words, "no hope," thrilled alike on our ears and hearts. I now began to note down each evening such words as would be precious in the remembrance, and perhaps I can not do better than make extracts from this sad diary.

The scenes on which they lift the veil seem, indeed, almost too sacred for strangers' eyes; yet, I may recall and make my own the words of Fanny

Forester when, in her memories of Mrs. Sarah B. Judson, she portrays the closing scenes in the life of her first husband. "There is nothing on earth so beautiful as the household in which love forever smiles, and where religion walks as counselor and friend. No cloud can darken it, for its twin stars are centered in the soul. No storm can make it tremble—it has an earthly support, the gift of Heaven, and a heavenly anchor. But the roof beneath which it dwells shelters a sacred spot, where the curious eye must not peer nor the stranger-foot tread. So it is with the warm soul-breathing missives now beside me. \* \* \* At this moment, however, a pair of young, dark eyes rise before me, that will read the page with the interest of an only and beloved daughter, and then turn back tearfully to the sad scenes which she can not yet have entirely forgotten. For her sake shall a few passages be written down that may perhaps recall lost fragments of the picture now in her heart."

So I feel as I look at "dear little Blue Eyes" standing beside me, who remembers her father's kind words and songs and stories, and her many little acts of love toward him; and who will, I am persuaded, prize, next to her Bible, the precious heritage of these his last utterances. So I feel as I turn in thought to the older children who now hold in remembrance much that is recorded here, but who, when years shall cloud and dim the impression, will seek these pages to refresh their hearts with the revived and brightened memory. And the further hope that in following a life of such Christian fidel-

ity and loveliness to its peaceful and triumphant close some timid spirits may find a lessening of their dread of the last conflict, induces me partially to unveil what might seem too sacred for the intruding gaze of the stranger. But it is not for himself alone that the servant of God receives his precious experiences of grace; it is for all who have the like heritage of sin and guilt and moral struggle. The life of one Christian should, as far as possible, be made available for the benefit of all; the joys and triumphs of each believer become the common heritage of the Church, and especially the light that for one has brightened the dark valley, should, as far as may be, be caught and thrown back to cheer others that are bound to the same inevitable pathway.

Therefore I make some extracts from my evening jottings at that time, when, after the house was quiet, the dear one comfortably settled for a nap, I sat down in the stillness and wrote these words, which would soon, I knew, be among the last on earth from him whose voice was music to my ear; in whose sunny smile I basked with joy, and whose loving words made earth a Heaven to me.

*March 15.* \* \* \* He seems to have more fever the last few days, and his cough increases very much, but the acute pain from which he has suffered has measurably passed away and he rests better, though his sleep is not refreshing. \* \* \* *His* hope never fails. He is submissive and patient, kind and loving to us all, and so appreciative of all we do. Even in his weariness he is always thinking of others. He thanks "the dear Lord" so often "for all His mercies to us,"—thanks Him for his

sleep, for quiet, for me, for his happy home, for his comparative comfort when he thinks of the days and the weeks after the amputation. He seems so grateful that I keep well, and am able to take care of him and be with him all the time.

As I remarked this afternoon that my head ached badly, I supposed because I cried so this morning, he said,

"Yes, I wanted to tell you that it was very unprofitable, but I thought you would feel better to have your cry out. But, darling, you must try to keep cheerful. I am struggling to stay on this side of the river, and it is hard sometimes to feel cheerful; but if *you* get blue and discouraged it will be harder still for me; *that* takes me right down. If it were not for you and the children, I would be glad to die this minute; that is, unless I could be well again, and do *work*, and be of some service." Then, in a more cheerful tone, he added, "But I think it is all coming right; we ought to be hopeful. I *expect* to enjoy many happy years with you yet." O, how hard it is for me to respond when he makes such remarks!

This evening, as he looked at Gracie, he said:

"Dear little tot! what a comfort she has been to us. I think her presence and sweet cunning ways have helped you to bear the burdens." All his words are full of love. Sometimes I think he feels that he is growing worse, and I notice how his eyes will follow Gracie, oftentimes with a sad look as if he thought, "poor little dear, I'm afraid you will soon be left without a dear papa." But he says nothing of the kind, and does not want to hear a discouraging word, or see a sad look, or catch even the echo of a sigh.

A day or two since he had a beautiful vision which brought gladness to his heart, but sorrow to mine. He



awoke from a short nap and said in his pleasant voice: "Darling, are you there?" I was sitting at the foot of the bed where he could not see me, and when I replied, he remarked:

"I have had a glorious vision. I hated to awake and see it vanish. I don't know where I was exactly, but just before me I saw a beautiful being lift a curtain, and then, turning toward me, he said, 'Gaze in there; there is joy and gladness.' And I looked and saw such a beautiful place; oh, I can't describe it, but it was filled with lovely, happy people, and they were full of mirth and joy. And the one who lifted the curtain said, 'There is no pain or suffering, but only joy to those who enter here.' Then the curtain dropped and the vision vanished. Now," he added, "I take that for a good omen. I think the glad times are soon coming back to us, and our home will be filled with mirth and joy again." But the vision brought no such glad thoughts to me! I felt that the curtain would soon be lifted and he would enter that joyful home, but I should be left here, and the glad times were *not yet* for me.

*Thursday, March 16.* To-day he has passed quite comfortably, except that at times his breath is very short, and his coughing spells wearing and hard to get through with. But when they are easier than he anticipated, oh, how grateful he is, saying so earnestly, "Thank the dear Lord for that." But if he has a long, hard time, he is so patient and uncomplaining! He still has those terrible chills and sweats; is very restless, very feverish. I have had to keep the windows open all day, notwithstanding the wind and rain and snow, and even then he has many times felt a sense of suffocation, and the pain in his chest seems to increase. \* \* \* This evening sister Fanny has been singing some sweet old-fashioned



hymns in the parlor, which have given him great delight. His eyes filled as he listened to them, and when he talked of the blessed times in the old prayer-meetings, spoke of the different members that used to take part, and said, "I thank the dear Lord that He ever honored me by allowing me to preach the blessed gospel. Blessed be His name! He has helped me all through my life! His grace has done it all. Had I not been converted and become a minister, I don't know to what a depth of depravity I might have sunk. But the Lord has blessed me all through. When a friendless orphan He was near me, and all the good I have accomplished, all the little I have done, is by His grace and that alone, and I hope I can honor Him still for many years of work in His blessed cause." He is still full of hope, and feels terribly if I look sad or discouraged. I read to him from James, to-night, the chapter which contains the words, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up." O, how fervently he responded amen, to that passage! \* \* \* Indeed he does not want to hear anything discouraging about any matters whatever.

He is always glad to see his eldest son when he comes home, and enjoys a nice talk with him about affairs at the office; but if anything on the *shady* side is spoken of, he says, "Don't tell me that, Spencer; that makes me nervous; tell me all the pleasant things." He talks to him much of old times and old experiences, partly to entertain himself, I often think.

He has not been able to get up into his chair for some days, and to-day did not even sit up in the bed against the pillows. It tires him to raise his head, and he takes much of his food through a glass tube. He is very weak, and he breathes so heavily that his whole body moves.

But he keeps talking of getting well, and said to-day: "Do you think I had better get up and try to write a few letters, or shall I let them go for a few days?" I told him he had better remain in the bed while he was so weak; that there was nothing special to be gained by getting up. So he seemed satisfied, and I carefully turned him, rubbed his sore shoulder with bay rum, which refreshed him somewhat, and he said, "O, I'm so glad I did not make the exertion, this is so much better." \* \* \*

*Friday, March 17.* This has been a day of trouble and sorrow. His breath has been shorter than ever before. He told me this morning that he sometimes felt frightened about himself, and was afraid he might lose his breath altogether some of these times. He said, "You must raise me up, and give me more air when you see me so affected." The doctor was here this afternoon, but gave him no encouragement. After talking to him about his troubles awhile, he said, "Do you ever feel like giving it all up, doctor?" "No, only occasionally," Mr. Dickerson replied, "when I have those suffocating times. No, I am coming through all right." With a sad face, taking his hand, the doctor said, "Your faith is great, and that is the best part of it. If there was anything to build upon, and we could check this cough, you might soon get better." "If there was"—O, what little words, but of what great import to me. "If there was:"—They echoed through my heart like a dirge, and my silent, agonizing prayer ascended to Heaven, "Canst Thou not raise him up, even from this low place? O, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but I could not say, "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done."

Notwithstanding these words from the doctor, he still feels hopeful. He says he has had an assurance from the

Lord that he would get well, and remarked to me, "I wish you could get hold of the promises as I have done, and feel more hopeful, for I see you often look desponding, and almost despairing." I had a few words with the doctor in the parlor, and when I came back into the room Mr. Dickerson asked, "What does the doctor say? I see he is worried, and you are worried, and it troubles me." I replied, "The doctor feels almost discouraged. You are so weak and your pulse so high." "O, dear, dear," he said, "I am a poor, weak, sick body, and I must carry the burden, carry you all, when the doctor and every one else seems discouraged. I wish you all felt hopeful, and helped me along." What could I say? My tears were my only answer. \* \* \*

*Saturday, March 18.* I read to Mr. Dickerson last evening the 118th Psalm, in which are the verses, "Thou hast afflicted me sore, Thou hast brought me low, but Thou hast not given me over to death;" to which he responded, "No, no, thank the dear Lord, no." And another, "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord," to which he softly said, "Yes, yes"—and when I had done reading, he remarked, "That is a good Psalm; mark that one." This has been a quiet day. He has slept a great deal, and the pain is not as severe in his chest. He has not coughed as often, or as severely. Dr. Smith called this afternoon, and sat with him a few moments. He enjoyed talking to him, and to Dr. Cheney who was here a few days since, but he sees very few of those who call, and the few but for a short time. As Dr. Smith looked at a picture of the castle of St. Angelo, which hung above the fire-place, he said, "What a fine picture that is! How often I have crossed that bridge. How I should love to go there again!" Then after a moment he added, "I often think I may go again."

"Yes," said Mr. Dickerson, in a cheerful voice; "Well, when you go, take me with you. I sometimes dream of going again!" "I could wish for no better company," replied Dr. Smith. But after an instant, with a sad look on his face, Mr. Dickerson said, "Sometimes I think it is *all* a dream!" Ah yes! he will soon start on a journey to the other shore, but not hand in hand with me for a joyful rest and recreation in those Eastern lands where we once enjoyed so much together and spent so many happy days. \* \* \* He seemed very much exhausted to-night about ten o'clock, and looked more sunken and sick than I had ever seen him. I was just ready to read to him from the Bible, but he seemed so weary I said, "Perhaps you feel too tired to-night to hear me read?" He waited a few moments and then said, "I do feel very weary—but read me a few verses. Let us honor the word of God."

*Sunday, March 19.* No particular change to-day, except that he does not look as bright, and seems very, very weak. The children all went to Sunday school and to church. I read the *Watchman*, the *Examiner*, and the *Standard* to Mr. Dickerson while they were gone, and he seemed to enjoy them; but afterward as I turned him upon the bed, he was suffering so extremely, his throat burning, and his breath short, he said with a sigh, "This is hardly worth fighting for. I would almost rather go than to stay and suffer any longer." He still has these terrible chills, which we who are well know little of. He dreads them so that he has sometimes said when they begin to crawl over him, "I would rather die than go through another"—but, he would add, "I will try to bear all that the Lord sends upon me, and He knows why it is best."

\* \* \* \* Dr. Everts saw him a few moments this



afternoon, and from his looks and words Mr. Dickerson imagined that he too (who has always talked so hopefully) was becoming discouraged; for, as he was leaving the room, Mr. D. spoke up with his natural, full-toned voice, "Doctor, don't be discouraged. Keep praying with cheerful hope and faith." In a short prayer he offered in bed the other night—his last audible prayer—he said, "Dear Lord, though I am weary, and worn, and very weak, I thank Thee to-night that the day has been as comfortable as it has; that I have had so little acute pain, and so much to be grateful for. Give us a sweet sleep to-night, and may I awake in the morning feeling brighter and stronger. May it be Thy will to restore me soon to health, to enjoy all the rightful pleasures of life with the dear ones I love, and to work for Thee, that work I love so much, so well. Dear Lord, sustain me; hold me up when I am ready to sink. Let not Satan, the author of all our pain and sorrows, gain the mastery over me. BE THOU NEAR ME. Give me hope of heart, faith of mind, and constant trust in Thee. Bless dear Emma! \* \* \* \* \*

Be near her, and bless the dear children, and all in the house, and all we love. Keep us and care for us, and may I feel Thine arm upholding me all the time. We ask for Jesus' sake. Amen."

This evening I asked him if there was any particular chapter he would like to hear me read. He replied, "Yes, read in Acts of Paul's release from prison." I did so, and he enjoyed it.

*Monday, March 20.* A cold, wintry morning. It is snowing fast, and everything looks dreary in the outer world, but not more so than are our hearts to-day. \* \* \* This has been a hard, sad day, and at five o'clock, as I tried to raise him up I did not know but he would die



in my arms, he panted and gasped for so long a time. I was alone with him. He told me soon after that he was in great distress, and had very strange feelings. I immediately sent for the doctor. I saw him before he came into the room, and told him that when he saw Mr. Dickerson, if he felt that he could not live a great many days, he had better tell him so. I did not want him to die without saying something to us all, and I felt now that knowing his condition could not make much difference with him. Besides, I said, though no one in the world is better prepared to go, I think he would rather know it, if he must die, than to be taken by surprise. The doctor replied, "You had better send for your friends, and I will tell him." Spencer had then gone out to telegraph to Mr. Dickerson's sister, Mrs. Van Dusen, and to Mr. Goodman, who was in New York. The doctor went in, sat down by him, took his hand, timed his pulse, and then said, "Well, doctor, how do you feel to-night?" Mr. Dickerson replied in his usual, cheerful tone, "I feel pretty comfortable just now, and I think I breathe easier than I did. Now, if you can do something to help this throat of mine, which is very sore and raw, I think I shall soon feel better." The doctor replied slowly, "Ah, doctor, that throat is a minor trouble. The struggle is coming down here in your chest" (laying his hand there, and looking at him tenderly). "Can you bear to have me tell you something?" "Yes," said Mr. Dickerson, "any thing, doctor, anything." The doctor said very slowly, "I have done many hard things in my life, but this is the hardest thing I ever did, to come and tell you that you can not live long. 'Tis hard to tell one who has suffered so long and so patiently that he can not get well." Mr. Dickerson replied in the *sweetest* voice, "That does not trouble me, doctor; no, that does not

trouble me!" Then his physician added, "I have enjoyed your fellowship, doctor; I have loved you *so* much; more than I can tell you, and I have dreaded to come and tell you this." "That love has been reciprocated," said Mr. Dickerson. "Yes," said the doctor, "I knew it, and that is what has made me happy. I have used my utmost skill to help you, but I can not cure you;" and after a little pause he said tenderly, with a trembling voice, "*but the Lord can.*" Then he prepared some medicine for him, and told him he would do all he could to alleviate him. Mr. D. said very quietly and calmly, "That is all I ask, doctor." With a tearful good-bye the doctor pressed his hand, and left the room. As I took my seat on an ottoman by the bed, I said, as soon as I could speak, "You know now, darling, why I could not keep cheerful, why I have been in agony for weeks past." Taking my hand, and speaking, oh, so softly, he said, "Yes, but we'll talk about it by-and-bye." He wanted a little time to think, for the words of the doctor must have shocked him, even though he was prepared for the change. We sat quiet for a while, when he said very calmly, "The Lord has been our Friend all along, and He will be our Friend still. He loves us and will care for us; and if the doctor is right, and I must go, it will not be long before we shall all be together again, a happy band." Then brightening up, and with a smile on his face, as he looked at me, he said, "But *I* don't give it up yet. Though the doctor and everyone else is discouraged, you and I, darling, will fight it out still." "Yes," I replied, "I will always fight with you and for you, and the Lord's arm is not shortened that it can not save, nor his ear heavy that it can not hear." "That's it, you have it," was his emphatic response.

It was now about eleven o'clock. Spencer came in

and said he would sit up until four o'clock, so I lay on the bed by the side of the dear one; lay there for the last time. O, the agony of those hours none but God can know. I tried to be calm, tried to speak cheerfully and even hopefully, when I knew that in a few hours, or a few days at the farthest, the sweet spirit would be gone. How sick and sunken and emaciated he looked, and yet how beautiful was the smile on his face, how sweet the loving words that came from his lips, how natural his voice! \* \* \* He took nourishment of different kinds through the night, and slept some, but was not refreshed. Toward morning he grew very restless, and he said he was not sleeping when we thought he was, but was thinking of various things. He talked of Heaven, and of heavenly things, and seemed calm and happy. He told me about many matters and what I should do when he was gone. Among other things he said, "I know it will be hard and sad for *you*, darling, but try to be cheerful, try to be hopeful, and remember that I shall be waiting to greet you on the other side."

I asked him once, "Do you feel happy?" "O yes," he replied; and I added, "But you do feel disappointed." "Yes," he said, "I do somewhat; but *Christ is precious*." I asked, "Would you like to have me send for Dr. Cheney? Perhaps you would like to talk with him." He hesitated a moment, and then said, "No, that work has all been done. Just give me air, and Christ will do all the rest." I said to him, "Do you feel that you are almost home, and can you see the pearly gates?" He looked up, and, with a heavenly smile illuminating his face, he said, "Ah, darling! I have lived near them for a long time." To-day, as the children were singing sweet hymns in the parlor, he said, "O, the gospel, the gospel! what an honor to be permitted to preach it!"

And then the tears would fill his eyes as he said, "O, how I would love to preach again!" but immediately added, as though that might seem like repining, "But it's all right, all right; the Lord does not need me, and the good work is rolling on." He tries to sing some of the dear old hymns himself, but soon begins to cough, and has to give it up. The other day I noticed a disappointed look on his face when he found he could not sing the hymn Lyte, beginning,

Jesus, thy name I love,  
All other names above.  
Jesus, my Lord,—

I said to him, "I am sorry you can not sing that. I will get the children to sing it for you." "No," he said, "the piano disturbs me now, and I can think it over, if I can not sing it. I sometimes wonder why the Lord keeps me on this sick-bed, when I feel that I might be working for Him, and doing something for His cause, and for the paper; but He knows why it is, and I will try to submit cheerfully, and lie here as long as He wants me to, and feel that it is all right." In dictating a letter to a friend a short time before this, he said, "It is so much easier to be out fighting for the Lord than to lie here cheerfully submitting to His will."

Many times these past few weeks he has sung, "Over Jordan," and has repeatedly asked us to sing it at family worship; but it always made me sad and filled my heart with sorrowful forebodings.

*Tuesday, March 21.* I sent immediately after breakfast for an old and dear friend, as I thought the end might be near, and I wanted some one of experience with me. What a great change had come over him during the night! His hope was gone, and he sank



immediately. As I was eating a little breakfast near him, he said, "Have you telegraphed for Grace?" (Mrs. Van Dusen.) "Yes," I replied, "and for Mr. Goodman, too." "O, I am glad," he said, "I should love to see them both." "Do you feel that you are almost *there*?" I said. "Yes, darling, and Jesus is very near." I tried to speak calmly as I said, "It will soon be all joy to you, darling; you will have no more pain, no more trouble; it will not be hard to breathe in the heavenly air. There are many waiting there to greet you; Julia and Ada, and the dear little children." He seemed glad that I could talk in this way, and immediately added, "Yes, and my father and your father, and many others." And then, with a wonderful smile overspreading his countenance, he said, "Yes, I've been over the roll-call, and see a great many there." \* \* \*

I had cried a great deal during the night and after breakfast, and I had been praying that I might be able to comfort him, make his last hours more happy, and not speak so much of my sorrow, my broken heart. I said to myself, "I can not keep him—he is surely going home, and he can not make my grief lighter; but I *can* make his last hours somewhat brighter, if I keep calm, and I will try to do so." About nine o'clock in the morning, as I sat near him, I heard a bird singing out of doors. The windows were wide open, the morning clear and bright, but very cold, and as I looked out at the sunshine, I thought I would say, "This is a beautiful day to go;" but, checking myself, I said, "What a bright, beautiful morning this is! Do you hear that bird singing?" That expression seemed to gladden his heart at once, and he replied, "Yes, I hear it, and those are cheerful words, darling; I love to hear that."

He had rather dreaded to have his old friend come in,



for fear, I presume, that she would cry, and speak of the terrible sadness of his going, and yet he did want to see her; so, when she came toward him, he put out his hand, and said, "Good morning, Anna, I am glad you have come." Then added, slowly and emphatically, "Jesus is here, and it's all right." Not long after her coming he asked her to come to him, and, as she bent near him, he thanked her for all her kindness, and speaking a few words in reference to their long and happy acquaintance, he bade her good-bye, saying, "That is all I have the strength to say." I then said, "While you feel able, would you not like to say something to each of the children, and to us all?" Very quietly he replied, "Yes." He no doubt felt that the end was near, and yet it seemed as if he still thought there was a possibility of recovery; for, as he began to speak to Willie, he said, "Willie, my boy, my dear boy, they tell me that it seems as if I were coming to the end (though I am not certain)—" He then spoke so sweetly, so lovingly to each one, saying something appropriate to each of the family, and to sister Fanny and his brother's daughter, who were with us—words that never will be forgotten by any of them. When dear little Gracie, just two years old, was brought in and sat in my lap by the head of the bed, her father turned toward her with a sweet smile, and said, "Kiss me, Gracie." I lifted her over, and he kissed her twice, and then, in her cheery little voice she repeated after me, "Dear papa, good-bye. I will meet you in heaven. I will love Jesus and meet you there." How sweetly amid the gloom and sorrow her little voice sounded, and how lovely her father looked as he said, "God bless you, my dear little child." After speaking slowly and at some length to each one, he told us about many things

he wanted us to do, and then said to Spencer, his oldest son, "You will understand all about the matters with Mamma, and you will not abuse the confidence, I know." And then he said so beautifully to them all, when it was becoming very difficult for him to speak, "And now, children, I want to thank dear, blessed mamma—and I want to do it before you all—for all her love and care. She has been an angel of joy and light to us—*dear, blessed mamma!*—and when I am gone, she will need you all to stand by her, and help her; and you will, I know!" His face shone like an angel's all the time he had been speaking, and it seemed as if he were almost transfigured before us. When he had said all this, he offered a few words of prayer, beginning, "And now, Lord, my strength is almost gone." I can not recall the other words. I said to him, "You are tired now; rest a little," to which he replied, "I am, and it is so hard to get my breath." The children went to dinner, while I stayed with him. How calm he was! how triumphant! how he rested on the Lord! Jesus was a present help in trouble. I told him what a joyful entrance he would have to the heavenly land; that a starry crown awaited him there. I quoted the passage, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." He said, "Don't talk so, darling. I have been very unfaithful; but Jesus is precious."

After dinner, the children gathered around, and I asked him if there were any things he would like to give to them—"things you have worn," I said. "O, yes," he replied, as though he had thought of it, but had forgotten to speak of it. He then gave to each one something, and asked, "Are you all satisfied? Do they please you?" Then he sent messages of love to his brothers and sister, his uncle and aunt, and other friends; and

after a little while he said: "Is there any thing else you would like to ask me? You must try to think now, if there is any thing you want to know about. Perhaps there may be something delicate you would like to ask; if there is, you had better ask it now." I have no doubt he was thinking of his funeral and burial, but we could not ask him. He was very tired, and soon fell asleep.

About half-past two, Dr. Everts came in, and sat down near him. When Mr. Dickerson awoke and recognized him, he extended his cold hand to him, but for a moment did not speak. Dr. Everts made a few remarks, when Mr. Dickerson said: "My breath is very short, and this is a sudden change, doctor." Dr. Everts then knelt by the bed, and offered a short, fervent prayer, asking the Lord to be with him as he went down to the valley of the shadow of death, support him, and put underneath him His everlasting arms—to which Mr. Dickerson responded "Amen, amen." A few moments after, Dr. Everts asked him if he had any message to leave for his brethren in the ministry. He was silent for an instant, and then said, very distinctly: "Tell them to stand for God and the Baptists, for *Christ* and *His* truth, a spiritual church." The second clause he uttered emphatically as an explanation of the first; his good sense, Dr. Everts remarked, suggested it, for fear that some might call him bigoted, although the two had the same meaning to him. Soon after, he took a little wine whey, and I placed him in a comfortable position, readjusted the pillows, and took his hand and sat down by him. I asked, "Is there any thing more I can do for you?" With a sweet smile upon his face, and looking as though he already caught glimpses of a brighter world, he answered, "No, darling, all is lovely." That was the last sentence he uttered, except when he said, "Lift me

higher." In trying to take some nourishment a little while after this, he had a great struggle for breath, and seemed in agony, when I offered a little, fervent prayer, "Help him now, dear Savior, and make it easy for him," to which he responded "Amen, amen." Shortly after, he was in great distress, and asked me to lift him up. I raised his head a little, but he said, "Lift me higher, higher, higher," and with his cold, stiff arms extended, I lifted him upright in the bed, got pillows behind him, rested his dear head on my bosom, and felt that the end was near. For one instant a terrible, distressing look, like a dark shadow, came upon his face, and—he was speechless. But he could hear what I said to him, and saw that all his dear ones were about him. I repeated many comforting passages of scripture, and he would move his head or press my hand so that I understood that he heard me. These, among others, gave him comfort: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that are laid up for the children of God." "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "I will *never* leave thee, nor forsake thee." He seemed to love to hear them, and a sweet peace and a happy look overspread his countenance. Then I repeated hymns that he loved:

Jesus can make a dying bed  
As soft as downy pillows are,  
While on His breast I lay my head,  
And breathe my life out sweetly there.

And another:

There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign,  
Eternal day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.



I repeated most of that, and, as I asked, "Do you hear me, darling? Shall I say more?" he would press my hand as a sign that he wanted me to. He kept doing so, as I repeatedly asked him, until I could just feel the quiver of one finger. I said to him, "You are almost there. Jesus will soon take you; you will

"Rest your weary feet  
By the crystal waters sweet,  
When the peaceful shores you'll greet,  
Over Jordan.

"You will soon be over, darling. 'In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will return again and bring you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.'" One of his favorite hymns was that beginning,

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I repeated that slowly and distinctly. When I came to the last stanza,

His oath, his covenant, and blood,  
Support me 'neath the 'whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
*He* then is all my hope and stay;  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand —  
All other ground is sinking sand;

and to the fourth line :

*He* then is all my hope and stay,

I could feel that he made a great effort to let me know that he heard and *felt* them. I know that he experienced then that Christ was his hope and stay; I know that underneath him were the everlasting arms. His head still rested sweetly and lovingly on my bosom, and it seemed as if he were conscious as I kissed his dear fore-



head, and the children came, one by one, and kissed him, that dear, loving ones were very near him, trying to comfort him, trying to cheer him, as he started alone on that last journey; and, I have no doubt, he saw angel forms and loving arms extended, ready to welcome him to his heavenly home. We *tried* to sing "Rock of Ages," thinking he might still hear our voices; but we could not get through one verse. I repeated the remainder of it to him; but how I could do it, how I had the power to say all I did, when my heart was agonized and breaking—when my idol was vanishing from my sight—I can account for in no other way than this: the Lord helped me to choke back the tears and the groans, and to cheer and comfort him till the last. When I had finished this last verse,

While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When mine eyelids close in death,  
When I rise to worlds unknown,  
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee—

we could scarcely see him breathing, and, a moment after, he was gone. The Lord had answered the prayer in that hymn. There was no struggle, no gasping, apparently no pain. He simply stopped breathing—fell asleep in Jesus. Those pearly gates had been opened, and he was in the midst of the wonders of that beautiful Home, of which he had often preached and talked, and was near Jesus, I know, and praising Him for His love and His salvation. But—*we were here*. "My idol had vanished, my earth-star fled."

The following account of the burial service is taken from the *Standard* of March 30, 1876:

The funeral of Dr. Dickerson took place on Friday, 24th inst., at the First Baptist Church. A brief service was held at the house, previous to the departure for the church, prayer being offered by Dr. Dickerson's editorial associate. A considerable number of sympathizing friends had assembled at the residence of the family, to accompany them to the church, among whom were several Baptist ministers of the city. The pall-bearers were Revs. Leroy Church, T. W. Goodspeed, J. M. Whitehead, J. Donnelley, Jr., F. G. Thearle, and J. A. Smith. A bitter and driving storm came up as the hour for public service approached; yet, upon the arrival of the funeral *cortege* at the church, a large number was found assembled, indicating, in the circumstances, the warm regard in which Dr. Dickerson was held, and the sympathy felt for those so sadly bereaved. Besides the immediate family of Dr. Dickerson, the group of mourners included his brother, T. S. Dickerson, Esq., with members of his family; a sister, Mrs. Van Dusen, of New York; and Mrs. Richardson, mother of Mrs. Dickerson, and widow of the late Prof. Richardson, of the University of Rochester.

As the procession entered the room in which the audience were assembled, a chant was sung by the choir. The prayer of invocation having been offered by Dr. Northrup, who read in connection the Ninetieth Psalm, the choir sang the hymn, "Rock of Ages," a favorite with Dr. Dickerson, and sung to him shortly before he breathed his last. Dr. Everts, the pastor by whom Dr. Dickerson had been baptized in his youth, and who had ever since been his trusted friend and counselor, addressed the assembly, dwelling largely upon the early Christian experience of the deceased, with incidents of his life, and the more marked features of his character.

We may copy here the closing words of Dr. Everts' address :

He came to this city apparently to die. Still it is not a lost experience, even to us ; for it is a great thing to see a Christian die, and the experience of death, as it came to him, was a most blessed spiritual reality. Death is naturally an enemy to us, but faith in Christ can conquer even this last enemy.

Death came to our brother through a long sickness and through much suffering. His health was poor from the first, and he often thought he should be obliged to leave the pulpit on account of it. Still there was no complaining on his part, and he died very peacefully and calmly. Even during his sickness, his words were always hopeful and encouraging—to his friends, his pastor, and all. His death may be regarded as a complete Christian triumph. But he still lives with the Lord, and has only gone before.

Dr. Cheney, who followed, spoke especially of his acquaintance with Mr. Dickerson during his residence in Philadelphia, dwelling at some length on the qualities of character he had noted in him during the many years of their intimate acquaintance and friendship :

Catholic and kind as he was, he at the same time was thoroughly loyal to his own denomination. He was not a Baptist from mere sentiment, but from honest conviction and deliberate choice. As a student of the Bible he had thoroughly mastered the great principles he preached, and for their maintenance he was ready to risk his all. If any desired greater liberty than the Bible gives in regard to church polity or ordinances,

they found in him no countenance or support. He loved his denomination with a love stronger than death.

But, in looking over his public life, we are also impressed with the versatility of his talents. We have seen him as a business man, and he was at home in the walks of business. As an editor, he made a readable paper. His editorials were never dull; they were bright and sparkling — often vigorous and strong. As a preacher, he was always true to his principles, always sought to lead his people to “search the Scriptures.” I think he used illustrations freely, and there were frequent passages in his sermons of great pathos and tenderness. As a platform speaker he was peerless. His racy anecdote, his genial humor, his ready repartee, gave him power over an audience. But perhaps more than anywhere else he shone in social life as a pastor among his people. The old and the young, the rich and the poor alike found in him a true, loving, faithful friend. While he was the light and the life of every social circle he entered, still he was everywhere the Christian and the Christian minister. No wonder that his people loved him, or that he held so large a place in the hearts of his brethren in the ministry.

In speaking of his public life and labors, I must not fail to emphasize his great love for his work. Next to his love of the gospel, he loved to preach that gospel; or, if this privilege was denied him, he loved any work for Christ and His church. Scarcely have I seen him once during all the period of his sufferings, that he has not talked with me of the “precious gospel,” and of the “precious privilege” of telling it to others. Though it cost him a great struggle to leave the pulpit with the conviction that he had no reasonable hope of returning to it, still the hope of working for Christ and truth in



this field, I doubt not, sustained him weeks and even months when his frail earthly tabernacle was tottering to the fall. Even the last time I saw him, he was full of his chosen theme of work for Christ. "We shall yet do service together," he said, "for the Master whom we love so well." But when this hope of farther usefulness left him, his hold of life was loosened, and he entered, we doubt not, into the joy of his Lord.

The closing prayer was then offered by Dr. Moss, President of the State University of Indiana. The lid was taken from the casket; friends looked for the last time at the serene, composed face; and the beloved one was then borne away to his resting-place in Oakwood Cemetery.

Among tributes, additional to those already given in this volume, we may take for insertion here the following, from an editorial article in the *Standard*. After alluding to various particulars of his life, which need not here be repeated, the article proceeds :

We need not dwell longer upon these details. A life so active and so rich in results abounds in biographical material, but our failing space warns us to be brief. Dr. Dickerson came to Chicago, and the place that he hoped to fill on the *Standard*, in the same spirit that had ruled his whole life. It was his wish and intention that the religious journal should be to him very much what the pulpit had been, affording, perhaps, less opportunity for immediate contact and for specific results, yet having in view the same ends, with a scope far wider and in some respects more potential. His associates in the *Standard* had looked to his coming with unusual interest and expectation, and during the few weeks that he was able



to come to the office had increasing reason to feel that he was certain to be in every way a great accession to their force. His enterprising spirit gave spring and impulse, even under the disadvantageous circumstances which, in some respects, were so disappointing to him and to us, while every contribution of editorial matter, though written often upon his bed, and while tortured with pain and oppressed with the languor of long and wearisome confinement, was marked by his well-known qualities of nervous energy and practical adaptation. He always had words of cheer for his associates when they visited him, and his counsels in the management of the paper were invariably judicious and manly. It was his wish that this paper should be always firm, consistent, loyal to the truth, just in all its measures toward whatever party or interest, and, at the same time, such in its spirit as a Christian journal ought to be. What he was accustomed to advise, in these respects, was in substance expressed in one of his latest sayings, when asked by Dr. Everts if he had any message for his brethren: "Tell them," was his reply, "*tell them to stand for God and the Baptists—for Christ and His truth.*" Unconsciously, he had uttered, in this, the motto of his whole career.

We do not attempt, here, any detailed analysis of Dr. Dickerson's character. The sketch we have already given abounds with suggestions to that end, and may safely be left to make its own impression and tell its own tale. With singular kindness of spirit Dr. Dickerson united remarkable decision and firmness. His sense of justice, his apprehension of truth as truth, were quick and clear, and these alone he accepted as the guides to conduct. As a Christian he was spiritual, devout, trusting—a child of God in the best sense of the word.

Spiritual things, to him, were both real and precious ; he lived in the strength and the joy of them, while the experience of them was, in all his work, a constant inspiration. As a friend he was true as steel ; he did not know what it was to be any man's enemy, and, where he differed or disapproved, always sought to judge with charity, to be generous so far as he could without ceasing to be just. In his own family he was loved as such a man could not fail to be, and he is now missed and mourned with a sorrow unspeakable. During his long and painful illness he has invariably received from them, especially on the part of his wife, all those loving, tender, and skillful offices which do so much to relieve and help. The sympathy of his brethren throughout the country he knew he had, and it has been to him a source of exceeding comfort. Above all, the presence of the dear Savior has been a light to him in the dark night and a brighter sunshine in the cheerful day, and in that faithful bosom his weary head rested as he died.

Memorial services were held on the following Wednesday, March 29, in his old church in Boston, in which the Rev. Drs. Geo. C. Lorimer, A. Pollard, and E. K. Alden took a part. The house was draped in crape and trimmed with flowers, and in front of the pulpit was a life-size crayon portrait of the deceased. The church was filled to its utmost capacity by Dr. Dickerson's friends.

## IN MEMORIAM.

*Remarks of Rev. Geo. C. Lorimer, D.D., on the death  
of Rev. J. S. Dickerson, D.D., delivered in the  
South Baptist Church, Boston, March 29, 1876:*

Now kindred merit fills the sable bier,  
Now lacerated Friendship claims a tear;  
Year chases year, decay pursues decay,  
Still drops some joy from withering life away.

The spirit of these lines has invoked and gathered the solemn multitude who throng this sacred edifice to-night. We see as a matter of fact that death has a universal empire. The world may have made great progress since the days of our grandfathers and fathers. We may have better government, larger and more widely diffused knowledge, better and juster laws, a larger amount of happiness for the greater number. I hope and believe that, with some serious reservations, this is the case. Let us thank God for it. But the frontiers of life do not change with the generations of men, as do its attendant circumstances. We are born and we die just as our rudest ancestors; nevertheless, each fresh experience of this truth fills us with a nameless melancholy, and the tear unbidden falls on "lacerated friendship." Especially must we weep when the insatiate archery of death marks one who lived not for himself, but, turning from the strifes of the world, the allurements of office, and the passion for gain, consecrated his life to the pursuit of excellence, to beneficent labor, and to the undying interests of the soul.

Froude regrets that Protestants have no saints, regarding, as he does, the canonization of the loftier among

those who have toiled and died as advantageous to those who yet survive. Evidently, the historian has fallen into a grievous error. We have our saints, but they are God-fashioned, not man-manufactured. This is the only difference between Romanists and ourselves. Grace molds those whom we honor, and we merely honor and venerate them — we never worship even the transfigured human; and the love of our hearts, not Papal bull or sacerdotal ordinance, beatifies them to the children of time forever.

We have our saints. Their names may be unknown, their position in the church may have been obscure, and their resting-places in the valley may be unmarked by monument; but their faces shine through the mist from the other shore, and their example, speechless but eloquent in its silence, pleads with us to follow where their footprints mark in the sands of time the way to Heaven. In our calendar, the mothers who inspired us, the fathers who admonished us, the friends who sustained us, and the disciples who cherished us, have an honored place. And among them, distinguished for consecrated learning and sanctified living, are the men whom the suffrages of free churches exalted to the rank of leaders and pastors. These are the saints we venerate — a goodly company, embracing in their ample fellowship not only the Luthers, the Hubmeyers, the Powells, the Fleetwoods, and the Bunyans, but the Staughtons, the Kempers, the Wallers, the Baldwins, the Waylands, the Fullers, and the DICKERSONS as well.

It was the custom in ancient Rome, a practice revived in some of the ceremonies of modern Papacy, to bring forward the images of departed friends, beautifully arrayed in all the emblems of their official dignity, while some one related the story of their achievements,

in the hopes of quickening emulation on the part of the living. But we need no sculptured image to restore to memory the face of him whose death calls us together this evening. It is graven in our hearts ; and his name alone, without a single word of eulogy, awakens a response which, like the far-famed echo of Dodona, will prolong itself throughout the weary day of our pilgrimage. Yet, it may be well, not for his glory but for our own good, if we meditate for a little season on his example as a lowly and dying servant of lofty and undying truth.

James S. Dickerson was born in 1825, and, in the city of New York, at the early age of fourteen, surrendered his heart to the Savior. This important decision was reached through the influence and labors of Elder Jacob Knapp ; and for the great evangelist he entertained a life-long affection. In after years, when malice or envy sought to detract from the well-earned fame of Mr. Knapp, Mr. Dickerson, however unpopular it might make him with a certain class of professors, never hesitated to espouse his cause and vindicate him from the accusations of his enemies. The subject of this notice was baptized by the Rev. Dr. Everts, who by a happy providence was permitted to comfort him in his sufferings, and to pronounce over his remains a tribute of Christian and ministerial affection.

Early in life, young Dickerson devoted himself to business pursuits, winning a name for probity and industry. One of his employers said quaintly that he feared the boy would never succeed in trade, his honesty was so rugged and incorruptible. Various circumstances, his natural temperament, and, as we believe, the call of God, inclined his feet to the path thus jestingly pointed out. In consequence, he entered Madison University in 1842, and was graduated in 1848.



Equipped for his work, you may judge his disappointment when it was found that his voice would not stand the strain of pulpit labors. For a time he was compelled to abandon his cherished desire of preaching the Word of Life. But a kindred path of usefulness opened to him in connection with a religious paper, the *Recorder*, of New York. In this relation he remained for a short time, and was then called to Philadelphia to manage the affairs of the Publication Society. Accepting this position he soon justified the choice which had withdrawn him from a less responsible sphere of usefulness. The Society, then in its infancy, grew and matured under his vigorous administration; and has since become in every sense of the word a truly national denominational institution, unifying the once discordant sections of our common Zion.

A great blessing was vouchsafed Dr. Dickerson while engaged in these labors. His voice was restored to him. This he interpreted as a renewal of his commission to preach the Gospel. Called to the pastorate of a church in Wilmington, Del., he gave full proof of his ministry and was rejoiced by the conversion of over three hundred souls. Here it was that his devotion to the temperance cause became conspicuous. His vivid imagination perceived the blight of drunkenness, and in glowing colors he exposed its deadly effect, not only on religion, but on knowledge, industry, and self-government as well. Many amusing incidents are related of his stubborn conflict with the liquor makers, and the liquor sellers. In every instance he was more than a match for his adversaries. Their denunciations and their ridicule never could swerve him one hair's breadth from his fixed resolution to fight to the bitter end the curse of intemperance.

While residing in Delaware the civil war broke out, which ravaged the South, and sent desolation to thousands of homes all over the land. From the very first he took his stand on the side of the Union. A national flag he placed over his pulpit, and fearlessly declared that he believed it represented the cause of liberty, justice and humanity. It should triumph; it must triumph; and to this sacred end he pledged his strength, his zeal, his intellect and his influence. The argument of economy, deemed by some in those stormy days to contain all that was conclusive to guide the North in its policy toward the South, never presented itself to him. The question of profit and loss, in his judgment and before his conscience, was absorbed in the question of right and wrong. His maxim was, "Anything but disunion—poverty sooner than disunion." Nor could he bring himself to support slavery, but believed most heartily that neither Christians, nor true Republican governments could consistently hold their fellow-beings in bondage. These sentiments exposed him to obloquy and calumny; but he was immovable. He took his stand, and though friends misunderstood and reproached him, as Luther said before the Imperial Diet, "I can take no other," so he could only wait until the day of vindication should arrive. "Follow my white plume," said the knightly monarch of France. "Follow the right," more glorious than waving plume or oriflamme, was the watchword of the humble preacher. On the close of the war, not with spiteful and malignant spirit did he pursue those who had taken up arms against the Government. He longed for union—a union in spirit as well as in fact. He was anxious that the closest and most fraternal relations should be promoted between the Baptists of the once alienated sections. Frequently in conversation

with me, knowing my intense desire that the denomination should be a unit in its benevolent and missionary operations, did he express his sympathy with my views, and his hearty intention when the proper time should arrive to do all within his power to facilitate their realization.

From Wilmington, Dr. Dickerson removed to Pittsburgh, where his labors were again blessed in a remarkable degree. Serious difficulties which imperilled the church he was instrumental in averting, and those persons who were arrayed against each other he succeeded in reconciling. It is needless to say that they all loved him, and regarded him as a brother as well as a pastor. He so endeared himself to the congregation and to Christians of other faiths that when he signified his intention of moving to Boston it caused universal sorrow. But his decision was reached in God's fear, and the devotion of man could not change him. He came, as you are aware, to your church, and within these walls his labors as a pastor ended. What he was to you, your sorrow witnesses; what he was to the denomination in this vicinity can never be truly estimated. He was the light of our ministers' conferences, the ardent supporter of every onward movement, and the friend of every youth leaving the retreat of the study for the adversities of the field.

I met him for the first time in this city. We had entered upon our pulpit labors here during the same year, preaching our first sermons as pastors on the same day, and naturally this circumstance inclined us to mutual confidence and intimacy. I was warmly attached to him, and I have every reason to believe that he was to me. Frequently have we spent hours together in friendly intercourse, and advised with each other regarding those

important movements in which we were called to bear a part. In this manner I became so fully acquainted with him that I felt sadly bereaved when he announced to me by letter his intended removal to Chicago. You know the rest. You know how the disease which developed here proved fatal there. You know how intensely your dear pastor suffered, and how he triumphed. Christ was with him through all the weary hours of bodily agony, gave him bright visions of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and permitted him to die in the arms of his kindred. "Lift me up! Higher, higher!" were among his closing words, symbolic of the holy aspiration of his nature; and while those around him tried literally to comply with his request, his spirit fled higher, far higher than mortal strength could bear it.

Dr. Dickerson possessed hardly any of the physical attributes demanded in the preacher by the advocates of muscular Christianity. His soul tabernacled in a body that was little more than a vapor. He was small in stature; but, when he spoke, his person dilated with the majesty of his thoughts. His voice was soft and musical, not loud or harsh in tone. He did not thunder or lighten in his speech. Like sunshine, his words descended on the souls of his hearers, and the frozen were thawed, the cold were warmed, and the barren were fertilized. He was distinguished for genuineness. No affectation or mannerism disfigured his piety. Manly in his bearing, every one was impressed with the sincerity of his character. He was true to God, true to his friends, and true to himself.

He was a man of great cheerfulness and of ready wit. I have seen him change a tempestuous meeting into a blessed calm, by some *bon mot* or quaint saying. Never at a loss for an answer, he would sometimes give to an



opponent one, which not only disconcerted him, but which carried the judgment of the audience against him. In the last letters I received from him, when in the daily endurance of great suffering, the same cheery, bright, hopeful spirit which distinguished him in health could be discerned.

It is not claimed that Dr. Dickerson was a scholar. He was a cultivated man, but he did not devote all of his time to study or to literature. Familiar with the classics, he was fully convinced that an education founded on them alone would necessarily be faulty. Not to the frigid philosophy of the Porch, nor to the marvelous teachings of Socrates, nor to the resounding line of Homer did he look for regenerating influences, but to the sacred teachings of Christianity. His sentiments were expressed by Cowper many years ago :

Sunk in Homer's mine,  
I lose my precious years, now soon to fail ;  
Handling his gold, which, howsoe'er it shine,  
Proves dross, when balanced in the Christian scale.

He was, consequently, a faithful student of the Bible, and a sincere teacher of its truths. His devotion to this one Book made him a very positive and consistent Baptist. He was not sectarian in the sense that his affections were all absorbed by one body, to the exclusion of others ; for he sincerely loved Christians of every name, and sympathized with Christ's work everywhere ; but he was sectarian in the sense that he believed the denomination in whose membership he enjoyed a place, was nearer to the New Testament standard of what churches should be, than any other.

I know these few words fail to do justice to our departed friend ; but they may, at least, as a faint outline



of what was once so clear and vivid to us, recall some of the features of his character. He has gone from us, and all that remains to us of his excellence is enshrined in memory. There let it remain, to be to our hearts an inspiration, and to our feet a light. This church-house is to me a lonely place without his presence. Never before have I passed up this aisle without a greeting from his sunny smile. But it is no longer here to welcome me. The house is cheerless and sad. Let us, however, rejoice that our religion is the religion of hope. Beneath its banner we march, and beneath it we fight and die. So we may indulge the hope, amid this oppressive gloom, that we shall meet our brother by-and-bye, when the old smile shall be restored, and when its brightness shall welcome us, after the storms of this life, to the peaceful haven of the life to come. Christians never say "good-bye" for the last time. There are no eternal "farewells" spoken by their lips. They may go out from each other in the evening, and one may wander for years o'er the rugged mountains of earth, and the other at once may pitch his tent on the plains of Heaven; but they shall greet each other in the morning, when the glory of the Lord shall shine upon his church, new-risen from the dead, and decked in bridal splendor.

In this dark world of sin and pain,  
We only meet to part again;  
But when we reach the heavenly shore,  
We there shall meet to part no more.  
The hope that we shall meet that day  
Should chase our present griefs away.

We insert here a letter from Rev. Dr. E. K. Alden, now Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, but for nearly

fifteen years the loved and honored pastor of the Phillips Church (Congregational) in South Boston, in response to a letter asking if he could recall his remarks at the Memorial Service held on the occasion of Mr. Dickerson's death, in Boston :

BOSTON, May 16, 1877.

MY DEAR MRS. DICKERSON: Your letter of the 4th inst. was duly received. I am glad there is to be a permanent memorial of your honored and beloved husband. Could I contribute a fraternal word to the memorial, which would be of any worth, most cheerfully would I do it. But it is quite impossible for me to recall or reproduce what came spontaneously from my heart, when addressing his and your sympathizing people face to face, at the memorial services in the South Baptist Church. Nor is it necessary. It is enough for me to bear my testimony to my high appreciation of the character which charmed even comparative strangers, and drew them toward him as though they had been life-long friends. This is my feeling as I think of him, and cherish his remembrance. I seem to have known him always, as I always hope to know him. I was prepared to love him before I met him, having heard him spoken of by a mutual friend in Pittsburgh. But the first grasp of his hand, the first greeting made me feel that we were indeed brothers in verity. I can not think of him without his presence rising before me ; there was so much in the manner difficult to describe, needing no description for those who knew him, which made him so agreeable a companion. To meet him Sabbath morning, as I often did—he on his way to preach Christ to his flock, his face beaming with the anticipated joy ; I on the same delightful errand to my flock—was a benediction for the day.

I would have trusted him anywhere, with anything, with perfect confidence that it would be utterly impossible for him in word, act, or thought to betray the trust.

Yet there was something about your beloved husband which impressed me more and more as I knew him better and occasionally heard him speak, which made me feel that there was a heroic soul within him fighting against a somewhat feeble physical frame—a battle, too, in which the brave inner spirit was determined not to be worsted. How fearful that conflict was during the later years of his life, I did not know until he had passed away. You, and possibly some others, knew it well. I can not think of him without the tears involuntarily starting in my eyes as I remember meeting him on a certain occasion when, it is plain to me now, he was fighting at fearful odds, yet with a purpose which would never surrender.

He impressed me as a speaker as one of the manliest of vigorous thinkers, his whole being borne on with the grandeur and the power of the thoughts which had taken possession of him.

I should expect him to maintain his ground most resolutely upon any point upon which we might possibly have differed, and to have loved him all the more, and been loved by him all the more for our conscientious differences.

I can not think of him as inactive even in the repose of Heaven. It is to me one of the brightest of anticipations to think of such spirits as his, when at length they are released, as springing with a bound I know not to what heights of rapture, to what intensities of *unexhausted* service. O glorious hour! when without let or hindrance or any such thing, the spirit, refined and beautified by the discipline of earth, shall be permitted to

expatiate as it will through all the many mansions of our Father's House! As it is one of my pleasant remembrances of the past that for a few years I walked by the side of your beloved husband as a brother in the ministry of Christ in glad fraternal fellowship, so it is one of my most joyous anticipations that I may hope to meet him again, and occasionally climb with him some one of the everlasting hills.

Excuse these rapidly written words—all I can do in the midst of pressing engagements.

A thousand blessings rest upon you yourself and your household, is the prayer of

Yours most fraternally,

E. K. ALDEN.

With the letters which follow, from Professor Wilkinson, of Rochester Theological Seminary, and President Robins, of Colby University, this record may close:

TARRYTOWN, N. Y., Aug. 8, 1877.

MY DEAR EMMA: I would very gladly bring my flower to add to the tribute which your faithful affection is gathering from many willing hands to lay on the fresh tomb of so much beauty and worth as perished in the death of your beloved husband. I know I can say nothing that will not have been already said by others before me; for there was an openness about the nature of James S. Dickerson that laid all the secret of what was noble in him bare at once to every observer. No, that is not quite true either. Those who knew him best, knew that he had strength as well as vivacity, sound judgment as well as quick wit, penetrative sagacity as well as superficial discernment, real hard-schooled goodness as well as native geniality, patience to work as well as preternatural faculty to get at results without appar-



ent process of labor ; and all these things in our dear friend such as saw him but occasionally might easily have failed to guess.

After all, the flavor of his character is something that only the memory of those who knew the man, and loved him, can retain. You can not gather it up, and fasten it from escaping, in a few words. You might as well hope to save the sparkle of champagne after exposing it to the air. That radiant good humor which was something other than the mere secretion of buoyant health—for he retained it, as we remember and admire, even in the extreme pains of his illness—that radiant good humor of his, how it purified and made sweet the overflow of his gayety and wit ! No sting lay concealed in the indescribable aptness of his swift and infallible repartee.

His first thought was kind—that was the felicity of his nature. But if it had not been, his second thought would have corrected the error—that was the fidelity of his conscience.

They mistook who might suppose that such unfailing complaisance had no backbone of sturdy principle to stay it up and make it valuable. I know well, and you know better, that his gentle, almost sportive, yieldingness in conversation played only within very fixed limits, which loyalty to his Master appointed. He was a brave and beautiful spirit. There are few like him left to die. Not a man living will grudge to his memory any word of ascription that he may win. I loved him, and I lament him. And I know that if I had entered still more deeply than I did into the heart of the man, it would have been only to love him and lament him more.

Affectionately, your brother,

WILLIAM C. WILKINSON.



President Robins writes as follows :

During the too short acquaintance which it was my pleasure to have with Dr. Dickerson, one trait of his character quite strongly impressed me, viz., the rare union in it of the sternest fidelity with the gentlest charity.

There was a knightly heroism in his advocacy and defense of what he regarded the truth, which was, in the highest degree, attractive. Having taken his position, he was as firm as granite in maintaining it ; he could not be moved either by flattery or by frowns.

Nor was there a trace of obstinacy in his firmness. Guided by a keen intelligence, he was always ready to give weighty reasons for his course, which, if not convincing to his opponents, were always worthy of their respect. His was not the obstructive *I will not*, but the aggressive *I will*. He comprehended the significance of our Lord's caution, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace, but a sword." He, therefore, neither desired nor expected peace except as the victory of righteousness. He vehemently scorned the weak sentimentality and bastard charity which shrinks from giving and receiving blows in the urgent spiritual warfare committed by God to his church. He was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and accepted a soldier's experience as fitting to the service to which he had given his life.

Nor, moreover, was there a trace of selfishness in his firmness. He did not debase the truth by thrusting into it the alloy of his own personality. He was in no degree a partisan. He defended the truth, not because he had united his fortunes with it, but always and solely because it was God's. He sought no personal victory. He was

one of these noble spirits whom Faber had in his mind when he sung :

God's will is sweetest to him when  
It triumphs at his cost.

In this absence of mere personal motive in his public work is given the secret of the gentle charity which distinguished him. His most earnest opposition to error was love-inspired. He consciously sought the highest good of those whom he opposed. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." He believed with all his heart that Christian truth is essential to the well-being of men. But he knew that, in the present state, Christians must necessarily sometimes differ in their apprehension of truth, and, hence, must "earnestly contend" against each other. Nevertheless, since the real end sought by all in these fraternal conflicts is one, he could see no reason why his own peace should be disturbed by personal feelings. His purpose was to bless, and for this he was ready to incur any danger, and to suffer the pangs of any misapprehension. He was ever in sympathy with the sentiment of the prince of the apostles when he wrote to the Corinthian Christians, "I will gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." His was the utterance of holy love, which can not endure error, since it is the deadly enemy of man.

He, in this manner, illustrated the gospel which he preached, and left an example to his brethren worthy of their study and imitation.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### RESUMÉ OF CHARACTER

BY A. C. KENDRICK.

The writer of this, having largely manipulated the preceding pages, adds, by request, under his own name, the present resum   of Dr. Dickerson's character. It is nearly a work of supererogation. The preceding pages have probably shed all needful light on that character; and, if they have not, it is too late to do it now. If they have failed to depict a character of uncommon loveliness, and a life of eminent devotion to truth and duty, no summarizing of qualities can now accomplish it. The test of the man is in what he *does*; and, though *being* is a vital part of *doing*, yet, if both have not revealed themselves in the life, though our eulogy might fit out a man with "all the virtues under heaven," we should have but a galvanized *caput mortuum*, a result parallel to that Chinese steamer which, modeled with Chinese fidelity after the noblest European pattern, possessed every conceivable excellence except that *it would not go*. No classified inventory of virtues answers for the living character.

Much less is any such minute analysis now required, after the admirable portraiture of Dr. Dickerson, drawn from various points of view, by the distinguished gentlemen who have kindly contributed

their reminiscences to this volume. I shall simply endeavor to gather up a few general results, and to signalize, possibly, a few traits whose illustration did not come within the scope of the preceding narrative.

I wish, first, to emphasize, as strikingly illustrated by the career of Dr. Dickerson, the value of religious character, not merely as contributing to general usefulness, but as a positive constituent of intellectual force and ability. Dr. Dickerson's native abilities would not be regarded as remarkable. He was not, as a college student, distinguished either by the depth or the range of his acquisitions; by any unwonted brilliancy or even exactness of scholarship. Few persons in the college anticipated for him the efficient career which lay before him, simply because they did not know how steady a purpose ran through all his acts, and how solid a spiritual basis underlay his character. The soundness of his heart ministered even more than ordinarily to the strength of his intellect. He became a philosopher because he had become a Christian. He made sound moral estimates, and formed shrewd and large judgments of men and things, because of the high standard which he instinctively applied to them, and because of those lofty spiritual truths which were at once purifying his heart, and enriching and expanding his intellect. Who can tell how invigorating the atmosphere and how wide the range of vision in that lofty realm of spiritual truth in which he moved?

The reader of the poems of Lord Byron never



ceases to admire the exquisite æsthetic sense, the more than classic grace and perfection of form in which he is nearly without a rival in our literature. In picturesque description, in rapid and brilliant narrative, in portraiture of life and nature, drawn with blended power, simplicity, and grace, he has few equals and no superiors. Yet, with all this, Lord Byron utterly fails to reach the highest realm of song; and this, because he has no profound and no divine philosophy. He could make no excursions into the highest realms of thought without encountering those truths from which his sneering skepticism recoiled, or which seemed to wither beneath his Mephistophelian touch. Brought face to face with God, and immortality, with the soul and all its highest and holiest relations, he is as dumb as the harp of Memnon before it thrilled to the kindling beam of the morning. Thus Lord Byron stands on the cold and glittering heights of Parnassus, self-excluded from that lofty and glowing heaven of song, opening far above him, where Milton strikes his lyre at the very gates of the celestial city.

I may be pardoned this digression for the importance of the truth on which it dwells. It can not, I think, be doubted, nor too frequently reiterated, that the highest forms of intellectual greatness and literary excellence demand as their condition the deep convictions of piety and the ennobling truths of religion. And the full benefit of these influences Dr. Dickerson enjoyed. They gave soundness to his practical judgment, and breadth to his intellectual surveys. They gave justness and deli-



cacy to the balances in which he weighed large questions of individual and public interest. They gave him an activity and aggressiveness to which his mere intellectual tastes or personal ambitions would not have prompted him. They led him, in reading, to master the leading phases of modern scientific thought in its bearing on religion. They made him bold to take up and do battle for denominational questions, and, both in written and oral discussions, encounter successfully men whose merely scholarly claims were superior to his own. They brought him (while residing in Boston) at times before the Legislature of Massachusetts, and secured for him a more than respectful hearing in his advocacy of some of the great politico-moral questions of the day. They led him, on his removal to Wilmington, at the outbreak of secession, to throw himself into the thick of the fight, fling the challenge of defiance to the enemies of the Union, and, while abating not a whit of his religious patriotism in the kingdom and patience of his Master, to put forth an energy that largely prevented an additional State from swelling the ranks of secession, and secured a recognition of his efficient loyalty from the Chief Magistrate of the Union.

This ripeness and fullness of Christian character was, in large measure, due to his fidelity in prayer. Dr. Dickerson was very eminently a man of prayer. He began his religious life with a strong faith in its efficacy. This faith never seems to have wavered; but, founded originally on the assurances of the divine word, it was confirmed by a large personal

experience of its power. He knew what it was to wrestle with the Angel of the Covenant, and to wrest from apparently reluctant hands the waiting blessing. The challenge which Prof. Tyndall's prayer-test, with a wickedness surpassed only by its foolishness, flung into the face of the religious world, would have rebounded from the tried buckler of his faith like the impotent weapon of Priam from the shield of Pyrrhus. His trust in God was child-like and implicit. He knew in whom and wherefore he believed. While in his study, during the preparation of his sermons, his breathings were often heard in the adjoining room, invoking the divine blessing both on their preparation and delivery. All his enterprises were inaugurated with prayer. All his burdens of duty and trial were borne to the Divine Helper, and in waiting on the Lord he perpetually renewed his strength, and kept up the high tone of his religious life. Thus he attained a rounded, symmetrical, and, it would seem, almost complete, religious character. There were in it no ugly flaws. There were no seams in the joints of his harness through which malice could send a poisoned shaft; there was nothing that made an *if* or a *but* requisite to modify the words of eulogy. His conscience was as sensitive as his principles were firm. Tender in his judgments of others, he was rigorous toward himself, and incapable of compromising a principle, or dallying with temptation. Of this fidelity to principle we might give many illustrations. The demands of principle were imperative, and neither in little nor in great could he be induced to disobey them.

One illustration of his Christian fidelity and kindness may not here be out of place. While walking along rapidly in the city of New York, in a rain-storm, he heard beside him a gentle voice saying, "Please, sir, share the shelter of my umbrella." Understanding the import of the proffer, he declined it, and passed on with quickened step. The woman followed, insisting that he should accept the proffered shelter, and stop at her house in an adjoining street until the shower was over. Struck by the plaintiveness of her tone, he turned, and, seeing a beautiful young woman, with a face as sad as the mourning garments which she wore, and an expression clearly alien from the life upon which she had entered, he paused, and, looking her gently in the face, asked her, "How could *you* come to this?" She replied, telling, alas! the "old, old story"—how she had been betrayed, and then discarded, and had no resource but in a life of shame. He walked along beside her, and told her of the Friend of the sinner and the outcast; of Him who had pardoned the Magdalene, and had withheld his condemnation from the woman taken in adultery. Thus following her to her door with words of tender and faithful instruction and entreaty, he left her with an inward prayer that they might not prove ineffectual. Whether they did, the judgment will disclose.

Dr. Dickerson's public life was mainly spent in the ministry. As a preacher, he was clear, impressive, and fervid. His voice was flexible and sonorous, his action graceful and spirited, and his religious earnestness, acting upon a temperament of exceeding

susceptibility, made him sometimes thrillingly eloquent. The lightness of his physical frame might, perhaps, seem to stand in the way of his producing the highest effects of eloquence. A certain material weight and massiveness sometimes greatly aid the orator in bearing down on the convictions and feelings of his audience. Yet Dr. Dickerson's lighter artillery was handled with a skill and dexterity that largely made good its deficiency in weight. And in intellectual and moral weight he was rarely or never lacking. His sermons were carefully prepared, with the aid of much reading and meditation, and then came direct from a heart glowing with divine ardor, and lips that had shared the heavenly anointing.

As a pastor, it was scarcely possible that he should not be equally loved and useful. His nature was so kind and genial, his sympathies so quick and ardent, his play of feeling so rapid and instantaneous in its adaptation to all needs and characters, that he was sure of a welcome to whatever place a pastor's vocation might bring him. By the bed of the sick and dying, he was a skillful comforter. His tender and delicate instincts of spiritual perception seemed to follow the parting soul into the very waters of the dark river, and aid it in catching bright glimpses of the farther shore. He could minister to sorrowing bosoms the consolations of a heart which, if it had not sounded all the depths of affliction, had sounded the depths of that "love" which "knows the secret of grief," and that subtle sympathy which can divine the mystery of as yet unexperienced sorrow. And, as in the house of mourning, so



in the house of feasting; in the festive gatherings to which our religion lends its sanction, he was equally in demand, and his genial and inspiring presence crowned the gladness of the occasion.

He was a skillful conductor of the prayer-meeting and the Sabbath-school. He would, in a quiet way, occasionally divert the school from its wonted routine of instruction, call out the teachers in brief prayers, or from his own treasures of thought and fertile and striking illustration, occupy the time to the profit and delight of all.

Nor were his ministrations confined to the spiritual wants of his people. He was their shepherd also in their temporal matters. The kindness of his heart led him constantly to sympathize with them in their business perplexities, and to give them the judicious advice which a naturally shrewd judgment, considerable experience of life, and an interest that made others' affairs his own, qualified him to give. Thus he often became the arbiter of their disputes; the settler of their estates; the almost legal adviser of the poor and friendless, rendering them invaluable service without money and without price.

But if without price to them, often not without price to himself. In pecuniary matters he was generous, perhaps even to fault. He brought and held his people up to the highest possible point of generous giving; but he did not urge them to a benevolence which he failed to practice himself. He advocated no cause to which he did not set the example of liberally contributing. He was ready to receive, and did repeatedly receive, aid from his



wealthier relatives. This he felt as no humiliation, but gratefully recognized their generosity. But he could not and would not, himself, forego the luxury of ministering to the pecuniary necessities of others—that blessedness of giving which surpasses the blessedness of receiving.

Indeed, there would be almost no end to the illustrations of Mr. Dickerson's kindness of heart. It acted in every conceivable form: its response to every appeal of want and suffering was instant and effective. Be the appeal religious or political, be the suffering of mind or of body—in the forts, of rebel prisoners; on the field, strewn with the dead and dying; in the hospitals, where words of cheer were to be spoken, letters to be written, a wounded limb to be bandaged, a darkened soul to be pointed to its Savior—nothing came amiss; he had a heart and a hand for every emergency. He was as prompt for physical as for spiritual needs. In Boston, on one occasion, the cry was raised that a woman in an adjoining house had set her clothes on fire, and was burning to death. Darting from the house, but seizing with quick thoughtfulness a large cloak or garment hanging in the hall, he flew to the woman, now rushing wildly round in helpless distraction, flung the cloak about her, and thus effectually smothered the flames, while he, at the same time, called for water to extinguish the fire which was spreading to other objects. He did all that could be done; but was, indeed, "too late to save." She had already swallowed flame, and survived but a few hours.

A more striking incident occurred while he resided in Pittsburgh. Sitting at his study window, he witnessed a terrible explosion in a rolling-mill a block or two from the house. He did what every one would have done, and was in an instant down stairs, out of the house, and at the scene of the disaster. But he did what many would *not* have done from lack of presence of mind and vigor for the emergency. Almost the first on the ground, he was quite the first, and for some time the only one, prepared for active measures. He rushed, himself, into the hot ashes, and drew forth the mutilated bodies, directing others to bring straw, carpets, bandages, and other necessities for the wounded. Perceiving that the engineer had been killed, he directed attention to the boiler which had not exploded, in order to avoid a second catastrophe. Thus he worked for two hours, his hands covered with blood and brains, and at the same time giving directions to others with the coolness of one experienced in such scenes. They took him for a surgeon, and obeyed his instructions implicitly. One little incident individualizes the scene, and reminds us what depths of private woe lie beneath such a disaster. As he had just cared for and sent to his home one poor man who was terribly wounded, he asked a little boy standing near if he knew who the man was. "That," replied the little fellow with streaming eyes, "is my papa." Alas! with every suffering "somebody's darling" always suffers. The vibrations of sorrow are like the vibrations of the air. Who can guess their limit?

Another illustration of Mr. Dickerson's kindness

of heart, lies in quite a different direction. Passing one day along the street, he saw near a fruit-er's stand a sweet-faced little girl with crutches looking wistfully at the fruit. Reminded at once of his own lame little daughter Ada, he crossed over and said, "Well, now my little girl, what do you see there that you would like?" The shy little girl dropped her head half frightened, and put her crutches in motion to limp away. "But," said Mr. Dickerson, "I want to give you this beautiful pear (cutting one from its string) and a few of these fine grapes. And where are your pockets for a few of these nuts and cakes of sugar?" With pleased astonishment the girl looked at him as if he had just come from fairy land. He then spoke to her some kind words, and as she departed he followed at a distance that he might see where she resided, and when again coming this way, might call and inquire after her. A little time after, being in this neighborhood, he again procured a like supply of grapes and "goodies" and called at the home of his little beneficiary. The door was reluctantly and partially opened by the mistress of the house who rather curtly inquired what he wanted. He replied that he had become interested in a little lame girl who lived there, and had called to inquire after her and bring her a little fruit. The door instantly swung wide open, and the heart of the mother along with it, and exclaiming that this must be the gentleman who had shown such kindness to her daughter, she cordially welcomed him in. On conversing with them he found that, by a singular coincidence, the name of the little girl was

Ada, the name of his own suffering daughter, and a certain resemblance to whom in her sweet face and form had first attracted him to her. After uttering words of cheer and peace to the household, and especially invoking upon it the peace of God, he departed, having, perhaps, made friends in this humble dwelling that would yet meet him at the gates of the Heavenly Paradise and welcome him into the everlasting habitations. An incident like this does not read very large in human history, but in the Heavenly annals it shines with

A purer fame  
Than gathers round Marengo's name.

In the huts of the poor, in the comforting of broken hearts, in remembering those whom the world forgets, and honoring those whom the world despises, are displayed the real heroism, and achieved the real victories of earth.

By the side of Dr. Dickerson's amiability and kindness of heart was the sunniness of his temper, the buoyancy of his spirit, a geniality and playfulness perpetually rippling over with humor, and often condensing and sharpening itself into wit. Both the wit and the humor were always kindly. No poisoned shaft ever went from his quiver to rankle in any bosom. Not indeed but that both the humor and the wit might sometimes subserve very serious purposes, and accomplish what, perhaps, argument would have failed of. Of his witticisms the reader has had many specimens. When he said that after being a few hours at sea he felt like "throwing up" the whole



voyage; when he said that his little boy would like all the better to have everything thrown into "pi" provided it were of the right *type*; when with grim humor he called on his mutilated leg to "speak for itself, and be the *stump* orator of the occasion;" when, in a public harangue against some proposed iniquitous anti-temperance legislation he was advising his audience to vote at the approaching election for a governor who would see that the license law was carried out, instead of for his opponent, who was an intemperate man, but a military leader, being interrupted with the cry that General —— would enforce the license law "at the pint of the bayonet," he instantly retorted, "Yes, and with a pint of whisky at the other end," he but uttered sallies the like of which were continually springing from his lips and pen. But he never wounded, or wounded only to heal. The law of kindness was in his heart and on his lips.

Dr. Dickerson was exceedingly happy in his wedded relations. His first wife was a lady of rare personal attractions and lovely character. In the early days of her bright and beautiful maidenhood the writer of this well remembers her, shedding brightness around the circle which she adorned in her occasional visits to Hamilton, where Mr. Dickerson first formed her acquaintance. As a wife and a mother she fulfilled the promise of her girlhood, and alike in his early struggles and his later still more arduous duties, she was the faithful friend, the judicious adviser, the joy and light of his home. His second wife, who, in addition to one surviving blue-eyed cherub



of her own, has succeeded to the care of his children, stands, as editress of the present volume, and with the expunging proof-reader's pen in her hand, between me and any words of indiscreet eulogy which my heart and judgment might prompt me to write. She can not, however, prevent me from saying that rarely has the loss of a first-beloved companion been more thoroughly made up. She can not prevent me from saying that she proved to him an equally capable and devoted wife, and has shown all a mother's devotion to his children; and she will not wish to prevent me from saying that her devotion has been repaid by an answering tenderness and affection. The investment which her husband made in the *Standard* he transferred to her. She herself presides ably and gracefully over certain special editorial columns; and her oldest son is one of the business managers of the paper. Of the two wives one went hand in hand with him through the trials and labors of his earlier public life: the other shared the deeper sorrows and walked in the darker shadows that gathered round its close. But both met the unfailing sunniness of his temper with answering brightness and buoyancy. Both partly found, partly made, partly shared, as happy a home as often gladdens an earth in which happy homes are a precious reminder of the bliss of Eden. And both, in the land where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, will renew with him, and with each other, that blissful intercourse which, with few alloys of memory, will have none of present bliss and glorious anticipation.

And here the curtain drops upon the record of a life of faithful service to God, and of large and varied service to humanity; of a character beautiful in both its human and divine elements; which, having blessed the earth, added, in parting hence, a priceless gem to the accumulating riches of Heaven. All honor to the Wondrous Name that amid the ruins of the apostacy works such miracles of grace, and refashions the crumbling structures of earthly character and destiny into the buildings not made with hands, eternal, in the Heavens!

## APPENDIX.

### A SUCCESSFUL LIFE.

*From the Memorial Sermon of Rev. J. D. Fulton, D.D., delivered in the First Baptist Church, Chicago, July 2, 1876, from the text: Mark x, 29, 30: "And Jesus answered and said: Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold more in this time; houses and brethren and sisters, and mother and children and lands, with persecution, and in the world to come eternal life."*

Our Lord is author of the statement that it pays to serve Christ, and to endure hardness as a good soldier for the sake of the Gospel. The successful life which ceased its activities on earth, and entered upon the enjoyments of Heaven on Tuesday, March 21, 1876, as James S. Dickerson crossed the bridgeless river, and received Christ's welcome plaudit, is a beautiful and forcible illustration of this encouraging truth. Happy are we in the privilege furnished us of contemplating his virtues, and studying the reasons underlying the victory won. Happy are we especially, because it is possible to praise without an "if," and to speak with enthusiasm of this wonderful character without a cautionary "but."

No one in Philadelphia, where July 6, 1825, he was born, and where he afterward lived, or in New York, or Wilmington, or Pittsburgh, or Boston, where he served his day and generation; or in Chicago, where he laid aside his armor, will question this meed of praise.

On every hand men, women, and children speak of him as one of the most genial of men, whose Christian life, beginning when he was fourteen years of age, found its

key-note in the words of Christ we have chosen as the foundation of remark. "For my sake and the Gospel's" he lived, and when he came to die, and was asked what message he would send to his brethren in the ministry, he replied slowly and considerately, "Tell them to stand for God and the Baptists; for Christ and His truth; a spiritual church." Good George Herbert said in the sixteenth century: "The pastor is the deputy of Christ for the reducing of man to the obedience of God." Dr. Dickerson ever felt and acted this truth. He never forgot the Captain of his salvation, under whose flag he enlisted, and by whose orders he marched. \* \* \*

The year that has gone has carried into the eternal world many ripened sheaves. Solomon Peck, D. D., for so many years the Secretary of the Missionary Union, died in Rochester in the ripeness of his fame. All who knew him mourned him. His work was done. He waited for the reward upon which he entered. I mourned him and rejoiced in his wonderful reward. Horatio B. Hackett, one of the best Greek scholars of this or of any land; a man who for years and years had shed the halo of his illustrious reputation upon the scholarship of the age, and upon the rising and rapidly growing repute of American Literature, passed from the activities of life without warning. Like Enoch he walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. He was a personal friend. As a man he was the most jovial and genial of men. At our table he has been an honored guest, and the children were refreshed and regaled by his ennobling sentiments, the stories of travel, and recollections of those whose friendship he had enjoyed. He died, and the news startled and shocked us. The family talked about him, called up his beautiful life, and rejoiced that God had spared so wonderful a man to us so long. Dr. Osgood, the saintly missionary, whose shadow has blessed the Western churches, as his life made glad the East, died in ripened age, and his works praise him even while we mourn his loss.

But when the tidings came of the death of dear Dickerson, there was a scene I shall not soon forget. Since the shadow of my mother's death crossed the threshold



of our home, there has been no gloom like it. For myself I could only find refuge in the words of David concerning Jonathan: "I am distressed for thee, my brother; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of woman." For days I was unfitted for work. I visited the sea-shore where we passed a day together two years before. I recalled the picture of him as he was with his wife and children on the way to Boston in 1870, with his bright look and his cheery speech. I thought of him as week after week, and month after month, we drove together over the beautiful roads about Boston, when he was so full of life and enjoyment. Methinks now I hear his ringing laugh, his wit, his voice in song, and his voice in prayer. I will say now that I used then to look forward to such a time as this and I made all in my power of this life, as I knew it and loved it. Then he was in strength. A year later the hard winter in Boston told on him. I visited him, and though he was in bed suffering from inflammatory rheumatism, we could not believe him in danger. Like a sky-rocket he waited but for the torch of wit, when he would go off and fill the room with gold rain. He came to see me afterward when convalescent, in Brooklyn. His words, who could forget them? His love shone through them. Then he wrote a letter to his wife which I have since read. It was like him. In it he said, "I am grateful that I feel so well this morning. If I can only get back a good voice once more—and I am quite hopeful—I think I am good for considerable service yet. There are many openings; but perhaps God has a work for me to do right where He has placed me, and it is far the wiser way to await His unfolded will. I am ready to do it. That is the happiest as well as the most profitable path that is marked out by Him." This was his faith, as is seen by many utterances. In the sketch of Thomas Stokes, his honored ancestor, he writes as follows: "It has always been true, and it ever will be, that the path of duty is the direct road to earth's best success, and Heaven's sure reward. To attempt deeds because they are conspicuously great, to strive for the attainment of results that will be deemed brilliant, with-



out putting forth a corresponding effort of an honest and homely endeavor, is at best but a higher type of ambitious vanity, and utterly delusive as to the achievement of even the cheap and unsubstantial honors of this world." \* \* \* \*

Afterwards, he came here, and was sick. There was a swelling on his knee. He went to the Hot Springs of Arkansas. He was not going to die, not he. He was soon to be well. He liked Chicago; he liked his partners in the paper and in the editorial sanctum. He liked his old friend who baptized him, and his friend who stood with him in Philadelphia. He came back from Arkansas, and was soon to be well; but he did not get well. I was in Toledo, Ohio, on my way home; and, opening the *Watchman and Reflector*, saw that he was going to die. His leg was worse; his physicians despaired of him. I took the first train for Chicago, and found him in Highland Park, that beautiful village by the Lake, in the home of his sister. He would not see me in bed; I must wait a few minutes. I did so. I soon heard his crutches on the floor. The door opened. There was the eye, the laugh, the greeting, but my friend was wasted to a skeleton. We had three hours together. We walked just under Heaven's opened windows. We heard the angels sing, and Jesus speak, and yet we were here. Never had I so good a day. I went immediately out of the city. I never saw him more. This may not interest another one in all this world, but yet in eternity I shall thank God for the privilege of saying what is in my heart in this presence. A few days before he died, I was in Wilmington, Delaware. After preaching an ordination sermon in another portion of the city, I went to his old church, where Brother Cook, the pastor, introduced me to the people, and I talked to them of Wilmington as I had heard about it from the lips of their former pastor. How glad they were to hear from him! They cried and laughed. They came and shook my hand, and sent love to him; and, before I took the night train, I wrote of their love and sent it on, and the next I heard of him he was dead. He received the letter, and

said he would answer it, but did not, for God beckoned him away.

Now, in what Dr. Dickerson did for the denomination, I do not place him beside the eminent Secretary Peck, or the distinguished scholar, Hackett; but in my heart I mourn for him as I never mourned for any other man. Why is this sorrow? It is to answer this question I am here. Do not misunderstand me. Extravagant eulogy would offend him, and humiliate me. He was not the ripest scholar, the finest orator, the best writer, or the most successful pastor I ever knew. If he were only a writer, or a scholar, or an acceptable preacher or pastor, I would not be out of my pulpit, and in this place, to praise him. It was because he lived for Christ and His gospel, and so for friends, and for a lost world, as very few men ever lived for them. It was more the way he lived, than what he did, that binds me to him. He was the one man that could love and work, month after month, without so much as asking the question to his inner self, "Will this help me?" Jonathan went out into the wood and strengthened David's hand in God. David never forgot it. Dr. Dickerson was doing this all the time. He was doing it for every one, for friends and foes; for men who were true to him, and men who were false to him, but who were, in his estimation, true to Christ. He never betrayed any one to serve himself. He was strictly truthful. You could rely on him. He was not a party man. He was not any man's man. He was true to God, to self, and to all the world. If he expressed an opinion, he would stand by it. He knew no such thing as fear. He could look any man in the eye, and tell him the truth. He had, as a result, marvelous power. He was a known quantity. He was pure gold. You could trust him where you could not trace him. He would help because his heart was in the business. He was always surprising friends, his wife, his children, with the prodigality of his love. \* \* \* \* \*

It pays to serve Christ. This is an old theory which is ever putting forth new buds of hope, new flowers of promise, and ripening into harvests that furnish seed

with which to sow the fields of the beyond. It pays to serve those who love Christ.

This world is full of grand men and noble women. There is a great deal more of unselfishness going on than the Christian church gets credit for. My praise of dear Dickerson is spoken at a time when the air is full of the echoes of resounding ruin. The Devil is trying to prove that there are no brave, noble, unselfish men. *The Devil is a liar.* There are great numbers of them. As some of the living may slip, and so make an eulogy a mistake, it is a comfort to paint a picture of Dr. Dickerson, and, holding it up, ask men to gaze on it, and declare, this is what comes of giving the heart and life to Jesus Christ. In American society, a Christian minister sustains vital relations to the people. \* \* \* There are those who are disposed to ignore the truth that a minister should be respected for his leadership in business, for political acumen. The life of Dr. Dickerson refutes their theory. His political sagacity was astute; his business faculty was immense; his leadership was almost prescient. There is evil in the world, and the greatest, the noblest, the purest, and the best are exposed to it. Their feet walk the ragged edge of a precipice, which is being revealed to the ruin of all. The battle of truth with error is not over. At times, wolves in sheep's clothing enter the fold. It may be, and it often is, the imperative duty of a good man to strip off the garments of the hypocrite, and expose corruption and deformity. Let us rejoice for the proof furnished in the life we are here to contemplate, that they who live for Christ and His gospel find in the end that God lives for them, and sees to it that right-doing is rewarded, and virtue and uprightness and honor are protected.

Then Dr. Fulton speaks eloquently of the character of one of God's true ministers, what he can be in its broadest sense as a great power for good, and adds:

We are here to glorify God because of what it is possible for Christ in a man to do or be, and for what a

man in Christ can do or be. \* \* \* \* A minister that never suffered, that never knew grief or poverty, or deprivation or chastening, would be a barren tree in the midst of a wilderness. It is the heart furrowed deep with the ploughshare of suffering, that yields harvests which are essential to the spiritual life of mankind.

The preacher then showed how from the beginning of the world, in the life of Abraham and the prophets, David, and other Old Testament worthies, they had offered up the same prayer, "Save us for Thy mercy's sake," and that when Christ appeared in answer to this God-begotten prayer, He had opened His arms to the people and said, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or father, or mother, or wife or children, or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, sisters and mother and children, and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life."

This is the new evangel. The curse is forgotten; Abram is forgotten; Israel is no longer mentioned; and David passes from the mind. "For my sake and the gospel's," is now the refrain. That Being who took upon Himself our nature and became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, who had not where to lay His head, whose wealth was unseen, and whose power was hidden, is to millions the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely; and for His sake, and His gospel's, they are ready to endure trial, suffering persecution, bear obloquy and martyrdom that they may tell the story of his undying love. Such a minister was James S. Dickerson. \* \* \*

Young Dickerson converted, was from the outset an uncompromising Baptist. Everyone knew it, and everyone respected him for it. How came this? Not by compromising with the truth; not by betraying friend-



ship; not by keeping silence when the occasion demanded honest speech. He possessed in an eminent degree the power of self-abnegation. He was the soul of honor. He wore a window over his heart, and you could look within and see Christ on the throne and behold His disciple sitting meekly at the feet of Him who is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. He was a decided Christian. He was the youngest in his class, and perhaps the smartest, but he never sought promotion, nor did he court honor. Praise was sweet to him. To earn it and not to claim it was his habit. He could live if he was not chief. He entered Hamilton Institution in 1842, and graduated in 1848 with the highest honors of his class. But his throat troubled him, and as he could not then preach, he did the next best thing, helped others to do so, and went with Martin B. Anderson into the *New York Recorder*. The Bible Union excitement was at its height. Giants walked the earth then if ever in politics and religion. Webster, Clay and Calhoun were about retiring from active duty; Douglas and Lincoln were getting ready for their memorable campaign. The battle of freedom was then being fought with words. The time for bullets followed in hot haste. In the religious world there was no rest, no calm, no quiet; but all was war, relentless war. \* \* \* Dr. Dickerson possessed a composite character. He could have been a great student. No man with keener zest followed the track of truth. No one was more loyal to it. No one was more brave in defense of it; no one would more readily make sacrifices for it. And yet he was the merriest, the wittiest, the most genial and generous of men. \* \* \*

There is a story told of William Guthrie, that on one occasion he had been entertaining a company with mirth-provoking anecdotes, and being called on afterward to pray, he poured out his heart with such deep-felt fervor to God, that all were melted. When they rose from their knees, Durham, of Glasgow, a grave, solid man, as he is described, took him by the hand and said, "Willie, you are a happy man. If I had laughed as much as you did awhile ago, I could not have prayed for four and twenty hours." Dr. Dickerson resembled Guthrie. He



could laugh and he could pray. His laughter and wit were to his life what are the ripples to the surface of a beautiful and deep-flowing stream. As I think of him I remember how I used to laugh at his gleaming wit, but forget what was said and only think of what was done. I have driven with him for hours along the shaded roads about Boston, and have talked with him about the work in which we were engaged; and although I remember his conversation from the moment he took his seat in the carriage was most enlivening and entertaining, and I am conscious that witty things were said, and that we laughed like boys let loose to play, my memory does not hold stories told or bon-mots uttered, but rather the purpose formed and strengthened to stand for God and truth with new courage and with fresh hope. Whether in private or in public, I never have known a man who lived more entirely "for Christ and His gospel."

The preacher then describes a man who enters the pulpit from other than the highest motives, the honor of God, and the salvation of men, and adds:

For such a man Dr. Dickerson had the most intense scorn. In his estimation the ministry is the noblest of professions, if a man's heart is in it; if otherwise, it is the most irksome and galling of professions. No talent, no genius, no popularity can sustain a man in the pastoral office who ignores the work, the consecration and the sacrifice the profession demands. \* \* \* Dr. Dickerson had great success, but not at the expense of principle. He found his success in God. He served Him faithfully, and organized for victory. He expected it to come because God kept His throne.

He then refers to his great boldness in standing for the right; to his work in Delaware and says that:

When it cost some sacrifice here in the North to stand true to liberty, he in the South, in a slave State, threw the stars and stripes over his pulpit, and preached a sermon, the key-note of his work which followed, which Lincoln acknowledged held the state to the Union. \* \* \*

From the outset he chose Christ. He was an out and out Baptist. "For my sake and the gospel's" he lived, and moved, and had his being. His purpose ennobled him. He believed that he would be accursed if he preached any other gospel than that given him by Christ. He felt that he was a necessity. God had work for him to do. He was conscious of it. He never undervalued himself, nor did he allow himself to be undervalued. Good words, and good government and social order all stood identified with his work. He lived above the world because he lived for God. His eye was on his Master, and *His* smile was his reward. \* \* \* Such a man can preach the gospel. His life is a mallet with which to drive the Christ of his tongue. He is on the Rock, while others are sinking into the wave. He can stretch out to lost men a helping hand. God is to him not only a necessity, but a joy; not only a covert from the storm, but a home, a pleasure, and a delight. \* \* \* He has gone to Heaven leaving behind a memory unstained by a single base or selfish act.

Dr. Fulton then speaks of the noble manner in which Mr. Dickerson, when associated with Dr. Anderson, managed the *New York Recorder*, and afterward the *Christian Chronicle* in Philadelphia; of his work for the Publication Society; and then of his success as pastor in Wilmington, Pittsburgh and Boston. He knew him best in Boston, and from what he says of his life there we make some extracts.

In Boston he was at home. Everybody loved him, and he seemed to love everybody. His residence was within sight of Boston Harbor, Dorchester Heights, and the finest stretch of hill and valley, sea and islands, city and shipping that can be found in the world. He gloried in the scenery, and he loved the town. As a preacher he took high rank from the first. As a platform speaker he had no superior. Wendell Phillips could not sway an audience with a more perfect mastery. As a temperance orator he was next to Gough. As in Pittsburgh,

money was to be raised and he raised it; burdens were to be lifted and his shoulder was first under the load, and the last to leave it. He never dreamed of failure, and never prepared for defeat. He expected victory, and always had his hand in waiting to welcome the combatants. He saw in every man a brother, and was ready to act toward every man a brother's part. He loved God with all his heart and mind and strength, and his neighbor as himself. He never loved unwisely. No stain ever came to the white soul and noble life of James S. Dickerson. He went up to Heaven leaving behind a wife rich with magnificent and loving memories, and children inheriting a record of which all might well be proud.\* \* \*

He had marvelous power over the impenitent. He knew how to speak of Jesus to sinful men. His adaptation to circumstances was wonderful. He could track doubt to its hiding-place, and uncover the possibilities of faith to the despairing. He was never at a loss for an expedient. I have seen him in a convention, when a congregation was surging with excitement, rise with a resolution, perhaps with a joke, or perhaps with an appeal, perhaps with a smile and perhaps with a tear, and that catch in his voice which was sure to create sympathy, mark out a way, and invite all to follow; and by the turn of a thought, or by the touch of a metaphor, carry the people with him and win the day.

The reward of surrendering all to Christ is seen in what came to him. In his union with the church he came into fellowship with a company of friends that stood by him till the last. They helped him in college, they helped him to position, to a trip to Europe, to a home, and stood by him all through. His best friends were God's friends. This reward is seen in his early home. His first wife was found in Utica. She was the adopted daughter of Julius Spencer, a man who held an honored place there. The present Mrs. Dickerson was one of her best friends, and this was a comfort to him whom both loved. She died after a short illness, and left behind four children, one helpless from hip-disease. His second wife was to him a perpetual source of love. It did me good to hear him talk of wife and children. I saw him soon after his

baby's eyes closed on earth and opened in Heaven. How sweet his trust! How joyous his outlook! I saw him when the little child came to him who gladdened the last hours of life here. He was a fortunate man in his home, and in what his home brought him. He lived for it. He would not go to Europe without his wife. That tour was a treasure of joy to him ever after. His reward is found in his friends. Honors came to him early. In 1851 the the University of Rochester conferred upon him his A. M., and the degree of Doctor of Divinity came to him from the University of Lewisbúrg in 1868. He gave all to Christ. In every place he took the burden on his heart which Christ would have carried had He been manifest. He worked where Christ would have him work, and as nearly as possible as Christ would have worked. As the result he obtained a hundred-fold in this life, and has entered upon life everlasting.

There's a Divinity within,  
That makes men great whene'er they will it;  
God works with all who dare to win,  
And the time cometh to reveal it.

And now my pleasant duty is discharged. I have spoken of my friend, in my poor way, as best I could; my conception of the man is within and untouched. I have failed to present it. But you know something by this how he was loved. In due time I expect to meet him. He will be popular in Heaven. Methinks I see him very near Christ, more like John than any other—the bravest, the truest, the one disciple who followed Christ into the Judgment Hall, and stood by Him close to the cross. There they are in the light of the throne. We shall see them by-and-by. Let us seek by noble and unselfish living to take up the fallen mantle and walk forth into the shadows of earth to minister unto all as best we can, till Jesus comes.















LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 021 898 733 3